

# **Miguel Diaz-Canel**

## **Selected Works**



### **Volume 1**

## Introduction

Comrade Miguel Diaz-Canel is the current President of Cuba and General Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, positions he has held since 2019 and 2021 respectively, making him the leader of Cuba.

He is the first person outside of the Castro family to lead socialist Cuba and will determine Cuba's future. The collapse of the USSR also meant the collapse of socialism in most places of the world, with Cuba being one of the few remaining socialist countries. While it is debated in the global communist movement, whether Cuba is still on the path of socialism and communism or if they have embraced the capitalist path, they clearly still uphold anti imperialism and proletarian internationalism and therefore deserve critical support from every socialist and communist in the world.

However, critically supporting a socialist country abroad always means studying them too, which is why the current political situation in Cuba and the other so-called AES-states (actually existing socialism) needs to be analysed thoroughly by comrades abroad.

Over the last three decades Cuba implemented a lot of market reforms, but still hasn't taken the same path as countries like China, Vietnam and Laos and the socialist relations of production are still in place to this day. The big question is whether their intention is to follow that path or keep going on the path of limited reforms. Both the constitutional reforms as well as the market reforms in Cuba over the recent years have been a topic of conversation within the global communist movement, yet actual sources were not that easy to come by and this wasn't helped by the global pandemic, which has affected Cuba as well.

Trying to research modern Cuba turned out to be rather difficult, as works by Comrades Raul Castro and Miguel Diaz-Canel were almost non-existent on communist library websites and navigating through Cuban news websites to find speeches and letters wasn't optimal either. Therefore, I decided to compile a selection of works (mostly speeches) of Miguel Diaz-Canel to understand his positions better and be able to determine myself what the future of Cuba will look like.

I also want to note that while all speeches are taken from Granma, the official newspaper of the Communist Party of Cuba and translated by the Cubans, the interview by Telesur was only available in Spanish so I had to run it through a translation software. There might be some small errors in that, but the interview should be understandable regardless.

Lastly, I would like to thank everyone reading this.

**WORKING PEOPLE OF THE WHOLE WORLD, UNITE!**

# **An End Must Be Put To Injustice Created By An International Order Which Is Increasingly Unjust And Inclusive**

## **Speech at the People's Summit in Brussels (June 11, 2015)**

PRESIDENTS, friends, dear participants in this Peoples' Summit:

I bring, above all, a greeting of solidarity from the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro (Applause and exclamations of "Fidel, Fidel, Fidel!"), as well as a greeting from our President Raúl Castro (Applause), heartfelt, warm greetings from the government and people of Cuba, (Applause) for you, organizers and participants in this important meeting.

With your profound reflections, you have contributed to sowing consciousness of the real problems which we face, and proposed ways to resolve them. We would now attempt, in a few minutes, to explain the ideas which Cuba defended in the CELAC-European Union Summit, as an active member of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Yesterday I recalled the first bi-regional Summit held in 1999, where the European Union proposed a "strategic partnership." Sixteen years later, this "partnership" has not been realized, because sovereign equality and mutual respect do not predominate in our relations, generally abusive and discriminatory, marked by asymmetries in development, and marginal economic-commercial and cooperation relations.

Needed, therefore, is an end to injustice created by an international order, which is increasingly unjust and exclusive, as explained here by President Correa, which has generated unbridled consumerism, the destruction of the environment, financial speculation, and which is controlled by imperialism, by its oligarchic banks, and groups of powerful transnational corporations, for the benefit of only a few. Current threats to the peace and security of nations does not come from the marginalized of the world capitalist system, but rather from those who impel nations into crisis by adopting programs of austerity which come at an incalculable human cost, and increasingly reinforce the differences between regions and the countries within them.

Nor do these (threats) come from students expelled from universities, unemployed workers, or thousands of youth of working age without jobs, the marginalized, the indignant, the women not receiving equal pay for equal work (Applause) or when pension funds and social security for the retired are bankrupted or cut.

Much less can minorities or national groups such as Afro-descendants, original peoples of Our America, or the Romani in Europe be held

responsible, or immigrants blamed, those persecuted for racist reasons, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and the absence of basic feeling of human solidarity. On the contrary, such conduct has led to the re-emergence of fascism, defeated on this continent 70 years ago, and a reality we must never forget. (Applause).

If we have learned something in Latin America and the Caribbean, it is that today's serious social and economic problems will not be resolved with the use of weapons and, much less, with dictatorships or terror, evils which we have suffered enough in Our America and in Europe.

What should be treated as a crime is initiating conflicts between countries, threatening peace and international security, NATO's advance toward Russia's borders - providing weaponry or supporting military adventures beyond the Alliance's borders, parcelling out zones of influence, or sources of primary resources. (Applause) This only brings death, destruction, instability and more poverty, since the significant resources needed for development are used to finance new wars.

Dear compañeras and compañeros:

After decades of struggle against efforts to isolate our Revolution in Latin America and the Caribbean, we have taken new paths toward political, economic and social transformations to the benefit of our peoples. Several revolutionary and progressive governments – those mentioned by Rafael Correa – are working to reduce poverty and inequality, to strengthen political and economic independence, and promote Latin American and Caribbean integration.

We insist on justice and equality. We value the legitimate right of our societies to freely choose their own route toward development, without external pressure or crude interference by those who still refuse to accept the sovereign choices of our peoples, and attempt to reverse them.

We are working to consolidate our young Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), an organization through which the dreams of our liberators are taking shape, the visions of our most committed political leaders and the aspirations of the left, popular movements, trade unions, student organizations, campesinos, women and artists of the continent.

In this organization all sovereign nations of the region come together, united in diversity, to learn to confront the complex challenges of today's world and of the future. The Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, approved by the 2nd CELAC Summit in Havana, In January of 2014, reaffirms the principles which must govern relations between our countries, and the unalienable right to elect one's

own political, economic, social and cultural system, as an essential condition for the assurance of peaceful coexistence among nations.

Nevertheless, these modest efforts are being heavily attacked by imperialist forces, as is occurring today with the sister Bolivarian and Chavista revolution of Venezuela. (Applause) There in Venezuela, the Venezuelan people and their constitutional government - headed by their legitimate leader, President Nicolás Maduro Moros (Applause) and supported by a strong civil-military union - are defending and consolidating a revolution which now belongs to all Latin Americans and Caribbeans: the revolution of Chávez, the revolution of Latin America. (Applause)

Today Venezuela is a symbol, and is therefore not alone. It has the support of our entire region, and is intent upon preserving the example of its founder and moral guide, the unforgettable commander and President, Hugo Chávez Frías, initiator of this change of era. (Applause) Of course, Venezuelans have all of our loyalty and yours, and Venezuela knows Cuba will never fail her. (Applause)

I reiterate our support to Argentina in its legitimate demand for sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands (Applause); to Ecuador, faced with the outrages of transnationals and media corporations; to the just claims of Caribbean nations for preferential treatment and compensation for the damages caused by colonization and slavery; and our unwavering commitment to Puerto Rican independence. (Applause)

Compañeras y compañeros:

Cuba is advancing in the updating of its economic and social model, to preserve the great conquests of the Revolution, to perfect our socialism, which we will never renounce, and to provide sustainable higher standard of living for our people.

It was precisely the dignity and perseverance of Cubans which led the U.S. to recognize the failure of its policy toward Cuba, implemented over 11 administrations, and which facilitated the return to the Homeland of the five anti-terrorists fighters, (Applause) events which led to negotiations for the reestablishment of diplomatic relations with the United States, which was also a result of the solidarity shown by all the peoples and many governments of the world, and also due to the solidarity with Cuba movement, of which you are a part, and why we have come to thank you. (Applause)

This step will be the first on the long, difficult path toward normalization of relations with this country, during which we will not concede a single one of the principles for which we have struggled and resisted for so many years. (Applause)

We will continue to demand an end to the criminal economic, commercial and financial blockade of our country - which remains intact – and the return of territory illegally occupied by the Guantánamo Naval Base, against the will of the Cuban people. (Applause)

That is why we say that a better understanding of realities, and the search for solutions to the serious problems affecting men and women on both continents, are the *raison d'être* of these Summits of the Peoples, and the meetings of committed Parliamentarians and intellectuals, where solidarity predominates, which, as Che Guevara taught us, is the expression of tenderness and love among human beings. (Applause)

We are convinced that not only is a better world possible, but imperative for the survival of humanity (Applause). Once again, I thank you, in the name of Cuba, for the respect, affection and solidarity you show us, day by day, in our battle.

Let us fight without pause for peace, justice and solidarity!

Long live the peoples!

And as we say in Cuba, ¡Patria o Muerte! ¡Venceremos!

(Ovation).

# **Humanity Has Placed Its Hopes In The Results Of This Conference**

**Speech at UN Convention regarding climate change (November 30, 2015)**

President Francois Hollande;

Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon;

Distinguished Heads of State and Government, delegates and guests;

Mr. President:

Allow me first and foremost to express the condolences of the people and government of Cuba to the people and government of France for the victims of the atrocious terrorist attacks in Paris.

Twenty-three years have passed since the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, where the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro Ruz, warned that, and I quote, "An important biological species is in danger of disappearing given the rapid and progressive destruction of its natural habitat: humankind." Already then, he foresaw that the only real and just solution would result from changing the patterns of production and consumption that emerged from the former colonial metropolises, imperial policies that led to backwardness and poverty for the vast majority of humanity, in addition to the promotion of a more just and equitable international economic order.

Today, this is still a prerequisite to stabilizing the global temperature in the range of 1.5°C, as we, the small island developing states, who are on the front line of the fight against global climate change, justifiably demand.

Cuba attends this Conference to advocate for an agreement based on more effective implementation of the Framework Convention of the United Nations. The Paris agreement must entail a firm global commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibility, and establishing a renewed framework for international cooperation to ensure the provision and increase of resources and technology transfer, in order that developing countries can comply with the provisions of the agreement.

The effects of climate change can not be fought by hindering the development of those who most need it, or national efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger in an extended area of our shared planet.

Mr. President:

Humanity has placed its hopes in the results of this Conference, which should lead to a fair and balanced agreement, without retreating from the commitment and leadership of developed countries, who should assume their historical responsibility with resolve and proportionality.

If 23 years ago it was almost too late to do what we should have done long ago, today it is immoral to continue postponing strengthened international action to address the effects of global climate change. We, the developing countries, with the required support, will do our part in this struggle, which is also our own.

Thank you.



# **It Is Essential To Defend The Unity Of CELAC**

**Speech held at a CELAC summit in Quito, Ecuador (January 27, 2016)**

Dear President Rafael Correa;

Heads of State and Government;

Heads of delegations and guests:

Just over four years ago, when Our America commemorated the bicentenary of its independence struggles, the 33 states of the region came together for the first time, with a common aim.

Since then it has been demonstrated, just as President Raúl Castro Ruz stated in his speech to the National Assembly of People's Power of the Republic of Cuba last December 29, that "it is essential to defend the unity of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), as an indispensable, legitimate, unitary mechanism of political agreement and integration..."

Mr. President:

In recent years, the challenges and dangers facing Latin America and the Caribbean have multiplied, due to an increasingly complex and unstable international political and economic situation. As such, working together in unity, while respecting our diversity and our differences, constitutes an indisputable necessity.

To this end, the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, officially signed in Havana on January 29, 2014, commits us to respect the inalienable right of every state to choose its own political, economic, social and cultural system; to peacefully resolve our differences, and not to intervene, directly or indirectly, in the internal affairs of other states.

Latin America and the Caribbean remains the most unequal region in the world in terms of wealth distribution. Current statistics, despite the questionable concepts on which they are based, demonstrate that 397 million of our citizens, or 63%, are immersed in a state of vulnerability and poverty, a figure that could increase, given the adverse international economic conditions.

That a single Latin American or Caribbean go hungry, or not know how to read and write, or be plunged into poverty, is a concern for all, which we must resolve together.

That in Latin America and the Caribbean differences proliferate, and we are unable to solve them by means of dialogue; or we are intolerant of the

diversity of political, economic and social systems; or indifferent to the very particular problems of small island countries in our region, is also a problem to solve among ourselves.

Cuba believes in cooperation, solidarity and the need for collective action, beyond egotism and intransigence. We have in CELAC the principles and mechanisms to achieve this.

We enjoy, among the achievements of this Community, instruments to define common positions in extra-regional relations, in compliance with the tenets of the Proclamation (of a Zone of Peace), which all states are urged to fully respect in their relations with our countries.

In this spirit, we are profoundly grateful for the solidarity of our brothers and sisters in Latin America and the Caribbean regarding the demand for an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the U.S. government against Cuba, which remains intact despite the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries; the support for the territory illegally occupied for over a century by the naval base of the United States in the Cuban province of Guantánamo to be returned to our people; and support for legal, orderly, safe migration in our region and an end to policies such as the wet foot-dry foot” policy, which encroach on the human rights of migrants and create many difficulties for countries in our region, particularly transit countries.

In the same vein of solidarity, we reiterate our strongest support to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the victim of a complicated international economic situation, aggravated by prolonged economic, media and psychological warfare, and numerous destabilizing acts encouraged and supported from abroad. We demand the repeal of the Executive Order of President Obama, declaring Venezuela a threat to U.S. national security, and the elimination of the sanctions applied on this basis to Venezuelan citizens. We reiterate that the Venezuelan government and people deserve the broadest regional and international solidarity.

We note the progress made in the peace talks between the government of Colombia and the FARC-EP, which are closer than ever to ending the conflict that has afflicted the country for over half a century. Cuba, as guarantor and host nation, will continue contributing to these efforts.

Our support for the people of Puerto Rico in the search for self-determination and independence remains invariable, as reiterated by CELAC.

We support the efforts of the Argentine Republic to recover the legitimately Argentine territories of the Islas Malvinas, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands.

We continue to accompany the Republic of Ecuador in its demands on transnational corporations who refuse to recognize and correct the serious ecological damage done in the Amazon, and the government of the Citizens' Revolution against destabilizing attempts.

We also extend our solidarity and support to President Dilma Rousseff and the brotherly people of Brazil in the battle being waged to defend the social and political gains of the last 13 years.

We stand in solidarity with the countries of the Caribbean in their great efforts to address the effects of climate change; we reject the unfair policies of international financial institutions which prevent their access to financial resources due to their Gross Domestic Product, and we support their demands for reparations for the damages of slavery and colonialism.

Dear President:

Tomorrow, January 28, the 163rd anniversary of the birth of Cuba's national hero, José Martí, author of the political essay "Our America", which constitutes a fundamental contribution to the ideals of the continental, anti-colonial and anti-imperialist unity of our peoples, will be commemorated. With his foresight, Martí called on us to implant the world in our republics, but noted that the trunk must be that of our republics.

Tonight, young Cubans, in tribute to Martí, will march with their torches held high from the University of Havana to the site where he suffered imprisonment and forced labor; this is a tradition dating back 63 years, in which many of our heads of state and government participated, on the occasion of the Second CELAC Summit, held in Havana two years ago.

Allow me, finally, to congratulate the Republic of Ecuador and its President Rafael Correa for their efforts in leading CELAC, and thank the Ecuadorian people for welcoming us so warmly to their country.

We pledge our support to the Dominican Republic and President Danilo Medina during their period leading the pro tempore presidency of CELAC that commences now.

Thank you (Applause).

# **The Venezuelan Revolution Will Overcome!**

## **Speech on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the death of Hugo Chavez (March 5, 2016)**

Dear President, compañero Nicolás Maduro;

Distinguished guests;

Dear Venezuelan brothers and sisters:

With profound emotion and revolutionary sentiment we wish to share with you, as part of this act, some ideas that express the sentiment of revolutionary Cuba, the Cuba of Fidel and Raúl, with the sister Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, with her people, with her legitimate government and, in particular, with Chávez, because for us Chávez lives on. (Applause)

As an affront to the memory of the eternal and invincible Comandante President Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías and the peoples of Our America and the world, a few hours ago the President of the United States of America decided to extend for another year the unjustified, disproportionate and dangerous executive order declaring a “national emergency,” considering that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela constitutes an “unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.”

Once more, the empire demonstrates that its aggressive essence and contempt for our peoples have not changed, reiterating its threats against a peaceful, solidary sister nation, and ignoring the unanimous indignation and condemnation that the issuing of this infamous order prompted just a year ago.

I want to repeat, and also reaffirm, what Army General Raúl Castro Ruz expressed during the 7th Summit of the Americas, in Panama, on April 11, 2015, and I quote: “Venezuela is not, nor can it be, a threat to the national security of a superpower like the United States.” And he added: “I must reiterate our total support, resolute and loyal, to the sister Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (Applause), to the legitimate government and the civic-military union led by President Nicolás Maduro (Applause), to the Bolivarian and chavista people who are struggling to follow their own path and facing destabilization attempts and unilateral sanctions which we demand be lifted, that the Executive Order be revoked” (Applause).

President Hugo Chávez was no longer physically present and it was opportunistically thought, as some continue to erroneously think, that those who succeeded him could not defend his legacy, and that it was time the Bolivarian Revolution paid its dues. There was no lack of attempts to

set Venezuela and Cuba against each other, offering the stick to one and the carrot to the other.

In one of his most intimate confessions, when he was already fully aware of his historic destiny, Chávez recalled the noted phrase that Fidel Castro ended his plea of self-defense with, appropriating it for himself, paraphrasing it in terms of the meaning that his life had taken, "History will absolve me."

As such, absolved by the whirlwind of the revolution unleashed with his coming to power, Chávez established himself forever in the hearts of his people and those of all America (applause), which is why we are here today, on behalf of Fidel, Raúl and all Cubans, to pay tribute on the occasion of the third anniversary of his passing.

In Chávez, the extraordinary gifts of a profound thinker and revolutionary strategist converged with infinite sensitivity, energy, and the ability to convince and put his advanced ideas into practice.

An exceptional, passionate and optimistic public speaker, he believed in the invincibility of the human spirit. The expression and sum of the most authentic Venezuelan popular culture. Lover, as much as any other, of his homeland, his faith and his people, a born political and military leader, his adversaries underestimated him, incapable of appreciating his intelligence and vision. And he was, above all, an infinitely solidary human being.

We Latin Americans and Caribbeans will never forget him uniting various wills, smoothing things over, to recover the dream of regional integration. Those who viewed his generosity as squandering the riches of Venezuela, were the same who for years defrauded their rightful owners, denying them (of these riches). (Applause)

Today, when the economic crisis, the collapse of oil prices and economic sabotage rock the country, there are those who aim to forget or refuse to remember that thanks to the generous and just revolution that Chávez unleashed, millions of Venezuelans were brought out of extreme poverty and hunger, gained access to health services, education and culture, and obtained jobs and housing. (Applause)

Today, President Nicolás Maduro and his team are determined to continue and consolidate everything that Chávez began, with the majority support of the people, focused on ending the rentier model, diversify production, guaranteeing basic services to citizens and creating a better security environment.

What more could have been achieved with more patriotic attitudes and respect for Venezuelan sovereignty, and less internal boycott and external aggression and subversion.

From experience we know that success depends on four key factors including: limitless fidelity to ideas and a just cause, which in this case are those of Bolívar and Chávez; the indestructible unity of all revolutionaries; the joint and tireless work of all; and an infinite faith in victory. (Applause)

Venezuelan brothers and sisters:

I speak not only as a representative of the state, the Party and the people of Cuba. I also do so as a Cuban who was born with the Revolution and grew up and has lived all this time subjected to aggression and the criminal economic, financial and commercial blockade, who chose the same destiny as the vast majority of his compatriots and therefore has had the privilege to live this moment of recognition of the existence of the Cuban Revolution and the socialist state in Cuba.

The path taken by our people to reach the announcements made simultaneously by the Presidents of Cuba and the United States on December 17, 2014, has been long and heroic. On the basis of respect for sovereign equality and without harm to national independence or self-determination of our people, we are willing to discuss the most diverse topics reciprocally and to continue dialogue, convinced that civilized coexistence is possible, despite our profound differences.

The normalization of bilateral relations is a challenge, which necessarily involves the lifting of the blockade and the return of the territory illegally occupied by the U.S. Naval Base in the Cuban province of Guantánamo. (Applause)

But it was a greater challenge to have reached this point. If revolution is a huge change in the lives of human beings, the revolution must be a movement, resistance, rebelliousness, risks, and the willingness to face them with very few resources and lots of creativity, solidarity, morale and principles. (Applause)

We revolutionaries are never alone. The Cuban Revolution was never alone and nor is the Bolivarian Revolution at this crucial time (applause), which is no threat to anyone, but rather hope and a bastion of solidarity (shouts of: "Thank you, Cuba!") Thank you, Venezuela! (Applause) It does not matter that imperialism and oligarchies launch attacks against revolutionary and progressive processes. We will not lose sleep over it. Do not worry about funeral announcements: you have already demonstrated that while a single Chavista remains alive and fighting, the revolution will remain standing. And you are millions. (Chants and applause)

During his last election campaign, aware that his time was up, the Comandante summoned Venezuelans and all Latin Americans to consider themselves Chávez, with that call of "We are all Chávez!" he gave us the

very last of himself, his own identity, to make it our own, to multiply in each of us as a means of redemption and faith in victory.

This is the man to whom we come to pay tribute today in Caracas. Cuba's best friend. (Applause) He who affirmed that no matter how much he did, it was not a sacrifice, while he complained about time, which was insufficient for all he had to do. "The people," Chávez assured, "expect a lot from us, and we must not disappoint them. They have been waiting centuries."

Inspired by the ideas of great men such as Bolívar and Martí, Che, Fidel and Chávez, we have all dreamed of a better and possible world and begun to build it. We will never give up on this. (Applause)

We do not want wars. We do not want blockades. We do not want interference. We do not want subversion. We do not want sabotage. We do not want models of selfish accumulation of wealth for a few imposed upon us. We want peace. We want social justice and equity. We want sustainable development. We want security and respect for our sovereignty and independence. We want to share what we have. We want happiness and prosperity for all. And we want the full integration of Our America. (Applause and shouts of: "The people united will never be defeated!")

Therefore, we emphatically demand the revocation of the executive order against Venezuela, we call on the international community to join us in this just demand and we reiterate once again, resolutely and loyally, our unconditional support for the Bolivarian Revolution, the legitimate government of President Nicolás Maduro and the Venezuelan people, who are struggling to keep the peace, maintain constitutional order, the gains of their revolution and the legacy of Comandante President Hugo Chávez, (applause) against the destabilizing attempts of the internal opposition, encouraged by the United States and its allies.

Once more we condemn the arbitrary, prolonged and cruel campaign of economic and psychological warfare against the Bolivarian government and people. We will not renounce the inclusive and emancipatory ideas that Fidel and Chávez have instilled in us.

Today, as we remember Chávez, I recall the memory of my compatriots, victims 56 years ago of the sabotage of the ship La Coubre, in the port of Havana, and the call of Fidel at that time to resist and overcome, with the historical slogan of "Homeland or Death! We shall overcome!" (Applause)

Venezuelan brothers and sisters: The Venezuelan Revolution will overcome!

Chávez lives! (Applause and shouts of "Chávez lives!")

# **The Nicaraguan People And Sandinista Revolution Can Always Count On The Unconditional Support And Solidarity Of The Revolutionary Cuban People**

## **Speech on the 38<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua (July 19, 2017)**

Comrade Comandante Daniel Ortega Saavedra, President of the Republic of Nicaragua; comrade Rosario Murillo; comrade Evo Morales Ayma, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia; comrade Salvador Sánchez Cerén, President of the Republic of El Salvador; compañeras and compañeros participants to the Sao Paulo Forum; sister people of Nicaragua:

On behalf of the Cuban people and government, please accept our congratulations, and an embrace from the President of the Councils of State and Ministers, Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, on this, the 38th anniversary of the Sandinista Revolution.

The Nicaraguan Revolution, as Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro noted on July 26, 1979, has been noted for its heroism, for its perseverance, and the tenacity of its combatants; today, it continues to be an example for the peoples of Our America.

Seeing, in this gathering of people, so many youth, so many joyful and optimistic faces, is a sign that the blood shed was not in vain, that the example of the General of Free Men, Augusto César Sandino, Comandante Carlos Fonseca Amador, and all of the martyrs that died in the struggle to defend Nicaraguan independence and sovereignty against imperial domination, lives on.

The Sandinista Revolution continues along its path with the majority support of its people, exhibiting indisputable political, economic and social achievements, while also actively promoting and defending the unity of our peoples and the need for integration.

Compañeras and compañeros:

Our region and the world are experiencing difficult times. The offensive led by imperialism and oligarchs servile to its interests seek to destroy revolutionary and progressive processes; restore hegemony in the region; re-impose savage neoliberal doctrines and practices; undo the political, economic and social gains made by our peoples, and revive an empire of the most retrograde forces.

Over recent months we have witnessed brutal political, economic and media attacks on Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution, initiated by Comandante



Hugo Chávez Frías and which constitutional president Nicolás Maduro Moros continues to resolutely lead; at the head of the civil-military union of the Venezuelan people, to whom we reaffirm our unconditional solidarity. Managua has been the site of days of commitment and revolutionary reaffirmation with the successful holding of the 23rd Sao Paulo Forum, whose Final Declaration and proposed actions, constitute instruments with which to combat the imperialist and reactionary offensive. The tributes paid to leader of the Cuban Revolution, Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro, and Che Guevara, on the 50th anniversary of his death, strengthen our commitment to building a better world.

It is now more vital than ever to build and strengthen the unity of our peoples. Cuba will host the next edition of the Sao Paulo Forum in 2018. Let us work responsibly to construct a united regional left by putting the Our America Consensus and Declaration into practice.

This past June 16, the President of the United States, Donald Trump announced his government's policy toward Cuba which reverses progress made in relations with that country over the last two years, with a marked tightening of the blockade against Cuba.

Cuba meanwhile, has reiterated that we will not make concessions of any kind or renounce a single one of our principles; and have reaffirmed our willingness to continue respectful dialogue and cooperation with the country, on the basis of equality, and respect for our sovereignty and independence. We thank the Nicaraguan people and its leaders, as well as the people and governments of the world for their gestures of solidarity. Comandante Daniel Ortega, comrade Rosario Murillo, sister people of Nicaragua:

Cuba reaffirms that the Nicaraguan people and the Sandinista Revolution can always count on the unconditional solidarity and support of the revolutionary Cuban people. We congratulate you on this, your 38th anniversary.

Long live the glorious Sandinista Revolution!

Long live the Sandinista National Liberation Front!

Long live Daniel and Rosario!

Long live the Cuban Revolution!

Long live Fidel and Raúl!

Long live the indestructible fraternity between our peoples!

Onward to victory, always!

## **Che's Colossal Example Lives On And Is Multiplied Day After Day**

### **Speech at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Che Guevara's death (October 8, 2017)**

Compañero Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Party Central Committee and President of the Councils of State and Ministers;

Family members of the fallen;

People of Villa Clara;

Compatriots:

It is with deep emotion that we gather here today at this sacred site of the homeland to pay tribute to the protagonists of one of the most important internationalist feats, an example in the history of struggle for the liberation of the peoples subjected to imperial domination.

The effort undertaken by Comandante Ernesto Guevara and a small but brave army during an 11 month campaign in Bolivia, moves caring men and women around the world.

Recalling the landscapes where he struggled between life and death, firm in his redemptive commitment, we witness his altruism, the depth of his convictions, his legacy, his revolutionary and internationalist dimension. Today, we commemorate the 50th anniversary of his fall in battle, on October 8, 1967. Without surrendering, after putting up an heroic resistance, wounded, with his gun rendered useless, they were able to capture him.

His captors cared nothing for the dignity and etiquette his revolutionary legacy demanded, and he was vilely assassinated; but history only remembers the cowardice of those murderers, while the colossal example of Che lives on and is multiplied day after day.

On announcing the bitter and painful news, Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro Ruz accurately described Che as "...the most extraordinary of our compañeros of the Revolution." (End quote).

To his personal qualities must be added convictions and values forged in the struggle, which saw him become, without idealizing him, an exceptional revolutionary, a special man, with a very unique outlook on life.

Fidel, Raúl, Almeida, Camilo, Ramiro, and other compañeros from the guerilla struggle and efforts to build the Revolution, as well as the Cuban people, saw and recognized in Ernesto his modesty, authenticity, sincerity, camaraderie, stoicism; his immediate willingness to perform the most

difficult tasks; his prestige as a leader, teacher and artist of the revolutionary war; tireless in his commitment and willingness to struggle until victory or death, for the freedom of the peoples.

Che has not died like his murderers wanted, his figure continues to grow with time as new generations of Cubans - raised under his example and that of his legacy - discover, recognize, and assume his paradigm as a revolutionary, making their own his eternal call for the sanctity of study, work and fulfilling one's duty.

His model of an altruistic man and conscious revolutionary is an example to follow.

As a leader and Minister, Che was able to apply new management methods in industry, while his example and rigorous system of control and discipline instilled commitment in his subordinates. He was also constantly concerned about the training and professional development of cadres and workers. As a director he founded factories and trained revolutionaries. His vital bond with the grassroots, and open, fluid conversations with the workers, developed in Che a strong ability to observe, analyze, and condense. He constantly sought truth and reason to defend and advance the construction of socialism.

As well as a leader and guerilla, he was also a revolutionary thinker, a humanist, an intellectual who understood the need to reflect on the Revolution, socialism, society, and the individual in Cuba; noting that the path of production and construction of socialism in our country are the responsibility of all.

He goes down in our history as a hero of the Granma expedition, the Sierra, the invasion and battle of Santa Clara, as one of our most illustrious and sacred leaders, as well as a chronicler and researcher of history, because he understood that history is a great teacher.

Che warned us that the present cannot become a return to the past and that in order to construct the future we must always remain united, because if we are to strike the enemy we must strike together, with the entire force of the people.

He was a model man, of firm ideological principles, who had a special relationship with books and literature. He was a lover of poetry, who through his writings left us his truths and motivations, his analyses, reflections, opinions, experiences, concerns and calls to struggle. With his attitude and resolve to act in accordance with his feelings, to say what he thought and do what he said, the Latin American homeland expanded.

It is true that today Che is a moral giant for people of different ages and for youth across the world who find in his unwavering example, his faith in humanity, his sense of honor and dignity, in the bravery and austerity which characterize him, the inspiration to build a better world.

This is why Fidel, in the solemn wake held in honor of his death, described Che as a true example of a revolutionary, as the new man to which we must aspire.

Continuing his legacy through assuming his example, making his absence purely physical, that was the right thing to do! We were called to find inspiration in his way of being.

This made us committed revolutionaries and motivated us to show that we could overcome enormous difficulties and challenges. There is no reason to regret, it is something that marked our lives, although as Fidel warned: "His example is difficult to match and virtually impossible to surpass." (End of quote).

It was right that the people assumed this task and if they didn't achieve it completely, history will show how each one of his children bettered themselves; here are the values, the deeds, the accomplishments, and the feats of the people to prove it.

What we cannot allow is for this to become an empty slogan, a routine, a simple repeating of words; it must be assumed through commitment, through inspiration, through conviction.

We must give true substance to the call to be like him, in order to face all life's challenges.

We grew up knowing that he had been murdered, of his heroic death, always fighting, dignified, and unyielding before his captors, with his last thoughts for Fidel and this people that love him like a son and who didn't know where he was, but held on to the hope that he would one day return. And he did return! After an intense, emotional search by a formidable team of scientists, his remains were found and brought to the homeland on July 12, 1997.

When Comandante of the Revolution Ramiro Valdés Menéndez, informed the Comandante en Jefe of the unforgettable and moving news that the mission to bring the remains of Che and his fallen compañeros back to the homeland, had been fulfilled, the sacred and long-awaited hope of his return came to an end.

At that time, Aleidita, his daughter stated, "Today their remains come back to us, however, they do not come back defeated, but transformed into heroes, forever young, brave, strong, and daring."

And that is exactly how it was. This sentiment was reaffirmed by Fidel during the ceremony in which Che and his compañeros were finally laid to rest in this plaza 20 years ago, on October 17, 1997, when he stated: "We have not come to bid farewell to Che and his heroic compañeros. We have come to receive them.

"I see Che and his men as a reinforcement, as a detachment of invincible combatants which, this time, not only includes Cubans but also Latin Americans who have come to fight with us and write new pages of history and glory."

"I also see Che as a moral giant, who grows taller every day, whose image, strength, and influence have multiplied throughout the world." (End of quote).

Thus he once again entered Santa Clara, victorious. Che immortalized this city, liberating it, creating factories, works, schools, hopes and lives, and today he and his compañeros from the Reinforcements Detachment immortalize it once again, because upon returning as survivors of death, victors of life, they found in her a warm and loving place to rest their weary bones.

This commitment, this inspiration grew throughout Cuba; it was the true moral and ideological reinforcement to support what we have experienced since then, what we face in the present, and what is to come in the future. Today, we are living in difficult times, in a world full of contradictions and uncertainties, at a moment characterized by growing threats to peace, when powerful interests of domination prevail, the survival of the human species is under threat, in the midst of an unjust and exclusionary economic order and a resurgence of destabilization and "regime change" policies against legitimately constituted governments.

Climate change and global warming caused by greenhouse gases of which human activity is primarily responsible, are irrefutable proof of the scourges of so-called capitalist progress.

It is in this current state of crisis that neoliberal capitalism is seeking to expand, to reestablish and broaden its capacity for enrichment, and in so doing destroy the world.

In order to do so, a standardized culture is required, one that enables capitalism to present itself as an unquestionable reality, using pseudo-cultural processes based on manipulative codes, which impose a single vision and way of thinking on the world, turning the values of the people into something out-dated and unnecessary.

The processes underway in Latin America are an example of these colonizing processes and in our case an expression of a marked interest in

political and economic re-conquest, opening the door to brutal capitalism. Political interests in the sister Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela are attempting to prevent Venezuelans from freely exercising their right to self-determination, with the United States launching constant threats and applying unjust sanctions.

History has taught us that when a different, just, and more humane revolutionary or social project is set in motion, it immediately encounters enormous difficulties, severe economic and diplomatic pressure, slanderous media campaigns, and even threats and military aggression to punish it for its audacity.

This is the price that is paid for challenging the capitalist system and imperial world order, and for attempting to make the people the owners of their natural resources.

Faithful to our internationalist vocation, we once again reaffirm Cuba's unconditional solidarity with the Bolivarian and Chavista people, its civic-military union, and the government led by Constitutional President compañero Nicolás Maduro Moros.

Meanwhile, certain spokespeople and media outlets continue to spread bizarre lies, without any evidence, and with the perverse aim of discrediting our country's impeccable conduct, universally considered to be a safe destination for foreign visitors, including U.S. citizens.

All together, these events are clear proof of what Che said when he warned us that "imperialism cannot be trusted at all, even a little bit!" (Applause). Che's example grows bigger, it is multiplied within our people who will not falter, but will forever defend their Revolution. Loyal to his legacy and to that of Fidel, we reaffirm that Cuba will not make concessions inherent to its sovereignty or independence, nor will it negotiate its principles or accept conditions. The changes that need to be made in Cuba are being sovereignly made by the Cuban people. (Applause).

Compañeras and compañeros:

This traditional tribute is being held for the first time without the physical presence of Fidel, whose dimension as a guide and revolutionary leader was recognized by Che when he stated: "If we are here today, and the Cuban Revolution is here, it is simply because Fidel was the first to enter Moncada, because he was the first to disembark from the Granma, because he was the first one in the Sierra, because he went to Playa Girón in a tank, but it was flooded over there, and there was even a fight because they wouldn't let him in. This is why our people have such immense confidence in their Comandante en Jefe, because he is the only person in Cuba to have all the

moral authority...to request any sacrifice in the name of the Revolution.”  
(End of quote) (Applause).

Fidel and Che will always be present because, as two individuals who share the same ideals, their profound knowledge of the ills of the world, rebelliousness, anti-imperialist and pro-Latin American stance, make them strong and unbreakable examples to guide the battles of these times; the battles for the independence, sovereignty and peace of all the peoples of the world; for the equality of all humans; for a just international economic order; for social justice; for true emancipation and for socialism.

As such, the legacy of their examples is present in our people’s response during Hurricane Irma and the subsequent recovery phase - an expression of the values learned and passed down.

Here today, from this historic Plaza and Memorial - a place for intimate revolutionary reflection, a place to express one’s commitment and honor with results, a must-visit site for those who believe in, aspire to, and struggle for a better world - we can state that his example can strengthen determination and that the future belongs to us.

¡Hasta la Victoria Siempre! (Applause).

# **We Reaffirm Our Loyalty And Fidelity To All Who Played A Leading Role In The Victory**

**Speech held in honor of the fallen revolutionaries (January 11, 2018)**

COMPAÑERO Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee and President of the Councils of State and Ministers,

Compañeras and compañeros of the Presidency,

Families of combatants who fell during the war of liberation or died after the triumph of the Revolution,

Beloved people of this municipality, who are preserving and consolidating the work born of the sacrifice and blood of their heroes,

Compañeras and compañeros,

Cubans are fortunate to have several venerable sites marked by our history. This is one of them, not only because of the battles fought here, but also because here lie our heroes of the wars of liberation, among the most outstanding of which is another Bronze Titan: Juan Almeida Bosque.

Shortly after the beginning of Year 60 of the Revolution, during which we commemorate the 150th anniversary of our wars of independence - or what is the same, the continuity of 150 years of struggle - the homeland again convokes us to a tribute at this inspirational site within Cuban territory, where we have come to inter the remains of 33 combatants of the Mario Muñoz Monroy Third Front.

The remains of these immortal patriots, some who fell in the insurrectional struggle and others who died after the revolutionary victory, return to remain alongside their legendary leader, Comandante de la Revolución Juan Almeida, in this mausoleum, located in these indomitable mountains which are home to, among others, two sacred sites: San Lorenzo and Dos Ríos, where the homeland's father and our national hero met their deaths.

Returning to this place, not to rest following their deaths, but on permanent watch, are three commandantes, seven captains, five first lieutenants, one lieutenant, and 17 soldiers, among them three heroines. Here they will remain on this hill's highest point, where they have forever reached the heights of honor they earned.

The foundation of the Third Front in these Cuban mountains reflected the strategic conception of the Comandante en Jefe, who considered decisive the opening of another battle front in the proximity of the second most important city in the country, Santiago de Cuba, capital of the then province



of Oriente, where the dictatorship had concentrated numerous military forces, among the best trained it had.

The mission assigned was to harass, hit, and immobilize enemy forces, making the Rebel Army's presence felt in the immediate area of Santiago de Cuba.

The front's columns were decisive to the defeat of the summer offensive launched against the General Command and to the Rebel Army victory that culminated in its entrance into the eastern capital.

When the dictatorship attempted to destroy the Revolution with Operation FF, the most experienced forces were regrouped to defend the insurrection's principal bastion. There were the combatants of the Third Front, who participated in intense battles, faced with a notably unfavorable correlation of forces. It was the revolutionary spirit, firm convictions, courage, and determination shown by these guerrillas during those heroic days that defeated the enemy's plans to capture the Rebel Army's General Command.

As part of this unstoppable advance, the front's combatants returned to the territory and began actions, at that time, to tighten the siege of Santiago de Cuba and paralyze the enemy's movement in the area.

Battles like those of Cobre, the Dos Palmas Garrison, El Platanal, Tres Pechos, Filé, Paraná; the battle of Guisa, in conjunction with the First Front; the taking of Baire, Jiguaní, Maffo, and Palma Soriano, in addition to more than 30 commando actions, sabotages, ambushes, and rescue operations, clearly show the combative mettle of these guerilla troops.

In addition to the demonstrated value of the Third Front's actions in combat, it served as an example of the organization and implementation of measures to benefit the population that would be a prelude to the transformational work undertaken after the triumph of the Revolution.

With the surrender of the Batista forces at Maffo December 30, the enemy's last outpost between Santiago de Cuba and Bayamo fell, and the Rebel forces of the First, Second, and Third Fronts who had fought together, prepared for the final assault on the city, which did not in fact occur, since the demoralized enemy laid down its arms and the cruel dictatorship collapsed January 1, 1959.

The assigned mission had been completed: the defense of the territory was achieved with the courageous, battle-tested effort of the honorable combatants of this front, guided by their very Cuban, strong, enthusiastic leader, Comandante Almeida, and decisively supported by the campesinos and people of these mountains.

With good reason, Raúl stated and I quote, "With his proverbial loyalty, effectiveness, and spirit of sacrifice, Almeida completed the mission of creating the Third Front, and then tightening the siege of Santiago." End of quote.

Today, with this heartfelt posthumous tribute, we reaffirm our loyalty and fidelity to all who played a leading role in the victory; we reconfirm our revolutionary, patriotic pride in this beautiful history; we express our determination to give continuity to the revolutionary work, facing new realities imposed on us in a globalized, unipolar world and by the hegemonic intentions of a neighboring super power, that persists in its efforts to erase historic memory, and install here a platform for the restoration of brutal capitalism in our nation, in order to, with its neoliberal recipes, reverse the humanist, inclusive conquests of social justice and equality we have achieved.

We Cubans must return here, time and time again, to uplift ourselves with the example of these troops that always accompanies us, commanded by Almeida, guerillas who nurture not only this land, but our patriotic sentiments as well.

Before these gravestones, we reaffirm with devotion and respect, that nothing will defeat the Cuban people in our resolve to defend and construct a sovereign, independent, socialist, democratic, prosperous, and sustainable nation.

This is a way of stating that we have not forgotten, and will not allow fissures or distortions of our historic memory, because the legacy is immense, of values, revolutionary sentiments, sacrifice, altruism, and examples that support us in understanding from where we come, who we are, and above all, to strengthen ourselves in the commitment to what we must do to protect, defend, consolidate, and perfect our conquests, because what happens today cannot be separated from the root that nurtures and unites us.

This way, we fulfill the precept of Martí that "to honor honors." We honor our heroes and martyrs, all those who contributed with action and concrete accomplishments; we honor our founders, our heroic and combative people, the historic generation that achieved the dream and made it a reality, Fidel and Raúl; and this way we honor the Homeland, the Revolution, and our socialism.

But this valid way of paying tribute on significant days must be reproduced and expressed in daily honors, that we must offer with creative, innovative work, with increased efficiency in production and services, with the creation of wealth and savings - counting on the contributions of all economic actors, all forms of property ownership and management, in order to, all united,

mitigate the consequences of the cruel imperialist blockade and overcome material shortcomings that impact the economy and affect the quality of daily life of our people.

Cuba defends with pride its heroes, just as one day they defended our independence. This is, and will be, the eternal commitment of loyal Cubans to the progenitors of our heritage: safeguard the sovereignty of our country. Cuba was, one day, because of them, free, and today and tomorrow will continue to be so, also because of them. Because their example calls us and guides us, because we made their victory our own, and it is up to us to make it eternal.

Consistent with their life's work, we must counterpoise their responsible, educated, decent conduct - the antithesis of vulgarity and banality - to indiscipline, illegality, and corruption, to root out the nefarious behaviors that damage and create obstacles to the honorable accomplishments of the Cuban Revolution.

Based on these, and other reasons, is our capacity to overcome adversity, grow, and surpass ourselves, to make our conquests sustainable, durable, better, and enduring.

To this task, our President, Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, calls us; our history of almost 150 years of revolutionary struggle calls us.

This will be the best of tributes and the most consistent with Comandante Almeida, with the members of this combative battle-tested troop, and his brother in struggle, Fidel.

Eternal glory to combatants of the Mario Muñoz Monroy Third Front!

Long live its founder, guide, and legendary leader, Comandante de la Revolución Juan Almeida Bosque!

Long live the homeland they freed!

Long live Fidel and Raúl!

Long live the Cuban Revolution!

Socialism or Death!

Homeland or Death!

Venceremos!

# **I Assume This Responsibility With The Conviction That All Revolutionaries Will Be Loyal To The Exemplary Legacy Of Fidel And Raul**

**Speech at the National Assembly of People's Power (April 19, 2018)**

Compañero deputy, Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba,

Compatriots:

I come to speak on behalf of all Cubans, who today begin a new mandate at the service of a nation whose history makes us proud; not only those born in this land, but millions of children of America and the world that love and respect it as their own.

I do so with all the responsibility that an act of this nature entails and with the awareness that we are not inaugurating just another legislature.

Martí said that "pompous words are unnecessary to speak of sublime men." And this is the case now, when I fulfill, with honor and emotion, the mandate of our people to dedicate the first thought to the historic generation that, with exemplary dedication and humility, accompanies us in this hour of pressing challenges in which Cuba expects that we be like them, capable of victoriously fighting all the battles that await us.

The presence of Raúl, Machado, Ramiro, Guillermo and other Heroes of the Republic, as deputies of the Legislature that takes office today, is not due to a, more than deserved, tribute for the work done. The Army General and First Secretary of the Party was the candidate to receive the most votes in the general elections, just as the Second Secretary and the Comandantes of the Revolution, also Heroes of Labor of the Republic of Cuba, were among those who received the highest number of votes.

They ennoble this hall and offer us the opportunity, by embracing them, to embrace living history.

More than half a century of slander and dark invitations to generational rupture and discouragement in the face of difficulties, have not been able to tear down the columns of the temple of our faith: the Revolution of Fidel and the Centennial Generation of Martí continues in its 60th year with the dignity of its founders intact and ennobled by having been able to do in each moment what each moment demanded.

With the constitution of the 9th Legislature of the National Assembly of People's Power, the revolutionary electoral process that the Cuban people have led in recent months comes to an end, reaffirming its eminently

democratic nature and, at the same time, conscious of its profound historic significance.

The people, exercising their civil right, have proposed, nominated, and elected their representatives in the different government bodies based on their identification with them, their merit, and ability to represent communities, social sectors, collective interests, without publicity campaigns subject to the power of money, without politicking or fraud, corruption or demagoguery.

The election has been the result of collective wishes, without any of those elected harboring personal aspirations. Citizens have honored humble, hard-working, modest people as their genuine representatives.

This is an election that emerges from the people, who at the same time control its administration, thus participating in the decision making and in the implementation of approved policies. And although we have done so many times in the last 40 years, we can affirm that this election process concluding today has become a resounding victory for the unity of the Cuban people, and an expression of their commitment to defend the revolutionary work in times of uncertainty for the majority of the planet's inhabitants, whose wishes do not count when applying policies that minimize their rights and curtail their conquests.

To that trust that the people place in us with their vote, there is only one way to reciprocate: acting, creating, and working tirelessly, to respond to their demands and needs, in a permanent and close bond with our humble, generous, and noble people.

If someone wanted to see Cuba as a group of citizens, according to their age, racial, gender, and occupational composition, it would be enough to view and study the membership of our Assembly and the representation of women, Black and mixed race Cubans, young people and senior citizens, who occupy decision-making positions at the highest levels of government, almost in the same proportion as the statistics that define the nation.

The most important thing is not, however, how much we resemble the country we are. What we cannot forget for even a second, as of this moment, is the commitment that we acquire to the people and to the future. All deputies, the leadership of the Assembly, the members of the Councils of State and Ministers, have as our primary *raison d'être* a systematic link with the population, which obliges us to deepen the analysis of the problems that concern society as a whole and the everyday lives of Cuban men and women, fostering a broad and sincere debate about them, and encouraging all possible ways to solve or mitigate their impact with the participation of those involved, either because they are afflicted by or because they have the ability to solve them.

Compatriots:

Two years ago today, in the closure of the 7th Party Congress, the Army General told us that his generation would hand over, and I quote: "the banners of the Revolution and Socialism to new leaders, without the slightest trace of sadness or pessimism, with the pride of having fulfilled one's duty, convinced that they will be able to continue and magnify the Revolution's work, to which great effort was devoted, and life itself for many generations of compatriots."

This means, among many reasons, that the mandate given by the people to this Legislature is to provide continuity to the Cuban Revolution at a crucial historic moment, which will be marked by all that we manage to advance in the updating of the economic and social model, perfecting and strengthening our work in all spheres of national life.

I assume the responsibility for which I have been elected with the conviction that all Cuban revolutionaries, from the position we occupy, based on the work we do, from any post or trench of the socialist homeland, will be faithful to the exemplary legacy of the Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro Ruz, historic leader of our Revolution, and also to the example, the courage and the teachings of Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, current leader of the revolutionary process (Applause).

I name them and I evoke Martí, in his biographical sketch of Céspedes and Agramonte: "The stranger, or the pretentious, or the ambitious can write these names without trembling: the good Cuban, cannot." Fidel and Raúl, bound by blood, ideals, and struggle, show us the meaning of the word brother in its highest degree, so valued in the emotional ties of national identity.

Much more. They, along with the men and women who brought the Revolution to this point, offer us the key to a new siblinghood, forged in the resistance and the shared battles that transformed us into compañeras and compañeros. Unity, so necessary while the nation was being forged, is since 1959 its most valuable and sacred strength; that has become extraordinary and invulnerable in the core of our only Party, which was not born of the rupture or splitting of others, but of the integration of all those that set out to build a better country.

For us it is totally clear that only the Communist Party of Cuba, the superior leading force of society and the state, guarantees the unity of the Cuban nation and is the worthy heir to the confidence placed in their leaders by the people, as compañero Raúl Castro Ruz stated in his speech on the 45th anniversary of the creation of the Western Army, on June 14, 2006.

That is why Raúl, who firmly prepared, steered, and led this process of generational continuity, without attachment to positions and responsibilities, with a high sense of duty and the historic moment, with serenity, maturity, confidence, revolutionary resolve, with altruism and modesty, remains through legitimacy and his own merit at the forefront of the political vanguard (Applause).

He continues to be our First Secretary, as the reference that he is for any Cuban communist and revolutionary. And because Cuba needs him, contributing ideas and purposes to the revolutionary cause, guiding and warning of any error or shortcoming, teaching, and always ready to confront imperialism in the face of any attempt to attack the country, as the first with his rifle at the hour of combat.

Raúl, as our people affectionately call him, is Fidel's best disciple, but he has also contributed innumerable values to revolutionary ethics, Party work, and the perfecting of government.

The work undertaken with his leadership in the last decade is colossal. His legacy of resistance faced with threats and aggressions, and in the pursuit of the perfection of our society, is fundamental. He assumed the leadership of the nation in a difficult economic and social juncture. He put revolutionary courage and his sense of duty ahead of human pain, and led the country without rest, committed, with certainty, with impetus, with dedication and devotion. As a statesman, forging popular consensus, he has led, promoted, and stimulated profound and essential structural and conceptual changes as part of the process of perfecting and updating the Cuban Economic and Social Model.

With patience, intelligence, and firm decisions, that at the same time required secrecy, he secured the release of our Five Heroes, thus fulfilling Fidel's promise that they would return (Applause). He has marked broad and dynamic international relations activity with his affable personal style. With firmness, dignity, and fortitude he led the talks and negotiations that had as their aim the reestablishment of diplomatic relations with the United States. He headed the CELAC presidency pro tempore, defending unity within diversity and achieving the declaration of the Latin American and Caribbean region as a zone of peace.

He decisively contributed to the success of the Colombia peace talks and has defended Caribbean countries, and in particular the always overlooked Haiti and Puerto Rico, in all regional and hemispheric dialogue scenarios.

His rousing voice and forceful speech at the Summit of the Americas in Panama continues to move us, exalting the true history of Our America and the reasons for the Spartan resistance and unwavering solidarity of the

Cuban people with the just causes of the region and the world, against all odds, threats and aggressions.

This is the Raúl we know, admire, respect, and love.

The student and rebel Raúl who participated in the first March of the Torches in January 1953, and who, in March of the same year, took part in the International Conference in Defence of the Rights of Youth, and the preparations for the Fourth World Festival of Youth and Students; the combatant Raúl who, in the heat of battle, assumed the command in the Palacio de Justicia of Santiago de Cuba, as part of the actions of the assault on the Moncada Garrison; served a prison sentence on the Isle of Pines; prepared for the fight against Batista during exile in Mexico; landed in the Granma; was reunited with Fidel in Cinco Palmas; launched the struggle in the Sierra Maestra; and due to his merits and bravery was promoted to Comandante.

The military commander Raúl, who in the Frank País Second Eastern Front, in the midst of the liberation war, developed organizational and governance experiences for the good of the population, which would later be duplicated throughout the country until the revolutionary triumph.

The Raúl who, at the head of the Ministry of the Armed Forces for 48 years, contributed to the achievement of results in the defense preparation of the country and in the development of the doctrine of the War of the Entire People, making it the most disciplined and efficient state administration body, at whose core experiences were developed that later served the country.

The political leader, Raúl, who has constantly promoted debate for the improvement of Party work, linked to the people, with ears kept well to the ground, and who, at very difficult times, convened us with integrity to prove that "Yes, we can," and thus, the country and the Revolution could be saved.

I am aware of the concerns and expectations that a moment such as this naturally raises, but we have the strength, intelligence and wisdom of the people; the experience and leadership of the Party; the ideas of Fidel and the presence of Raúl, also accompanied by the invaluable leader, human being and devoted worker, compañero José Ramón Machado Ventura (applause) as Second Secretary of the political organization representing Cuban communists; as well as the strength, prestige, loyalty, and example of an Army founded by those who will never cease to represent the uniformed people.

Knowing popular feeling, I state to this Assembly, the supreme organ of state power, that compañero Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, as first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, will take the lead in the most



important decisions for the present and future of the country (Lengthy applause).

We are living in a world characterized by growing threats to peace and security, interventionist wars, dangers to the survival of the human species and an unjust and exclusionary international economic order.

In this context, I reaffirm that Cuban foreign policy will remain the same and reiterate that no one will be able to weaken the Revolution or crush the Cuban people, because Cuba does not make concessions essential to its sovereignty or independence, negotiate its principles or accept conditions.

We will never give in to pressure or threats; the sovereign Cuban people will continue to decide the changes that need to be made.

I am aware that the task we are charged with entails an enormous responsibility to the people, which is why I call for the support of all those who occupy leadership responsibilities at different levels and in different institutions of the Revolution, but above all, I trust in the decisive support of the Cuban people, without which – and facing threats and challenges, which will always exist for a country committed to Revolution – it will be impossible for our society to successfully advance.

Our management and leadership must be increasingly collective, in constant contact with the people and facilitating the participation of the population in revolutionary tasks and decision making, through broadly democratic processes which are already an inseparable part of national policy.

In the same way that the Revolution has never made any promises over all these years, nor will I. I am here to express my commitment to work for and ensure the fulfilment of the program that we have given ourselves as a government and a people, in the form of the Policy Guidelines of the Party and Revolution over the short, medium, and long term. Only hard, selfless and efficient work every day will lead to concrete results and achievements which will represent new victories for the homeland and socialism, without ever abandoning the combative readiness of our undefeated Revolutionary Armed Forces.

This is how we will confront the threats of our powerful imperialist neighbor. Here, there is no space for a transition that ignores or destroys so many years of struggle. In Cuba, the people have decided, that there is only room for the generations born and educated under the Revolution and the founding generation to continue to work, without bowing to pressure, without fear or retreat, defending our truth and motives, without renouncing our sovereignty and independence, development programs or dreams.

We will always be willing to dialogue and cooperate on the basis of respect and equality, with those who are also willing to do so.

There will be no space in this legislature for those who aspire to the restoration of capitalism; this legislature will defend the Revolution and will continue perfecting socialism.

In order to tackle our internal difficulties it is important to emphasize that our priorities are defined in the documents approved at the Seventh Party Congress, and reaffirmed by Parliament, after being submitted to a broad process of popular consultation.

These documents recognize that political-ideological work, the struggle for peace, unity and ideological resolve, closely linked to the development of the national economy and ensuring the conscious, active, and committed participation of the majority of the population in the updating of our social and economic model, is our fundamental mission. Simply put, it is up to us to ensure implementation and advance this process.

Conscious of these priorities, it is our responsibility to perfect their implementation, correct mistakes, extract experiences, avoid improvisation, superficiality, delays and violations which irritate the population, sow pessimism and despondency, distancing us from our goals over time.

We must continually work to uphold unity, discipline, comprehensive analysis, and stringency in all organizations, bodies and institutions; in order to ensure that the great potential and opportunities that exist in our society are sustained and expressed in concrete results for growth, development, and prosperity.

On behalf of the compañeras and compañeros elected to senior positions within the National Assembly of People's Power and Council of State we express, with a deep sense of commitment, that we will never betray the confidence placed in us.

And to those who, owing to ignorance or bad faith, doubt the commitment of the generations which today assume new responsibilities within the Cuban state, we have the duty to clearly tell them that the Revolution is alive, and will continue to live on, with a sense of the historic moment, changing everything that must be changed; emancipating ourselves on our own and through our own efforts; challenging powerful dominant forces in and beyond the social and national arena; defending the values in which we believe at the price of any sacrifice; with modesty, selflessness, altruism, solidarity, and heroism; fighting with courage, intelligence and realism; never lying or violating ethical principles, and the deep conviction that Fidel transmitted to us with his concept of Revolution, that there is no

force in the world that can crush the power of truth and ideas. Revolution is unity; it is independence, it is struggling for our dreams of justice for Cuba and for the world, which is the foundation of our patriotism, our socialism, and our internationalism.

The Revolution continues its course without a single absentee, because we are even accompanied by our dead in crucial hours, just like Céspedes, Agramonte, Maceo, Gómez, and Martí, among so many others who were always present during our most difficult battles. To content ourselves with living in the shadow of the glory that precedes us would be to betray that same glory. The members of this Parliament have been born, raised, and learned with the founders of the Revolution that all dreams are possible to achieve, even when the opposite seems to be true. "You don't need wings to make a dream. It's enough to have hands, a chest, legs, and determination," as the poet would say.

This quote reminds us that the effort and sacrifice of Cuban revolutionaries have always been embraced by song and poetry, art and criticism. We are a Revolution that can say that it has been told and sung, from the very beginning, with the talent and originality of its artists and creators, true interpreters of popular wisdom and the dissatisfaction and hopes of Cuba's soul.

And that will continue to be so. Intellectuals, journalists, creators, will always accompany us in our efforts to ensure that this archipelago, put on the global political map by the Revolution, also continues to be recognized for its singular way of fighting while singing, dancing, laughing, and triumphing. We are Cuba, which means resistance, joy, creativity, solidarity, and life.

No other country has resisted for so many years, without surrendering, the economic, commercial, military, political and media onslaught which Cuba has faced. But this has by no means been on account of a miracle. It has been the result of, in the first place, an authentic Revolution which emerged from the very heart of the people, a consistent leadership which never put itself above the people, but at the front in the hours of greatest danger and risk, and of an army born in the middle of the mountains with, and for, the poor of the Earth, whose bravery and expertise transcend our borders and has acted with as much ferocity in war as it has creativity in peace. That is to say, necessity, originality, imagination, courage, and heroic creation, according to Mariátegui.

"Create is this generation's password" wrote Martí, a phrase which Fidel's generation made their own, and which those of us who have the reasonability of elevating his legacy, are duty bound to make our own.

Outside there is a world that looks upon us with more questions than certainties. For too long, and in the worst ways, we have received the erroneous message that the Revolution ends with its guerrillas.

In the age of communication, our adversaries have been able to lie, distort and silence our Revolutionary work. And even then they have still not been able to destroy it. We must be more creative when spreading our truth. At a time when there exist more tribunals than the open and multitudinous ones that were, at another time, the loud-speaker of the Revolution, we must learn to make more and better use of the possibilities of technology in order to inundate our truths across infinite spaces on planet internet, where today lies reign.

Let us clearly state that the Cuban Revolution continues to be olive green, and ready to take on all battles. The first being to overcome our own acts of indiscipline, mistakes and imperfections, while at the same time advancing "without haste, but without pause," – a wise warning from compañero Raúl – toward the horizon, toward the prosperity we owe ourselves and which we must achieve sooner or later, in the midst of the turmoil of a world weakened by uncertainty, injustice, violence by the powerful, and contempt for small nations and the poor majorities.

Compañeras and compañeros:  
On a day as symbolic as today, full of emotion and meaning, on which we have shared commitments and convictions, we think of Fidel, of his ideas, of his formidable, prolific, indispensable legacy, as a way of nurturing this genuine desire to keep him among us, forever.

May every fiber of our revolutionary lineage tremble when we proclaim: I am Fidel!

And we swear to defend until our last breath this "socialist and democratic Revolution of the humble, by the humble and for the humble," won for us by the historic generation fighting on the sands of Playa Girón, 57 years ago, and which now hands it over to us, undefeated and assured that we will know how to take it as far, and place it as high as they did, are doing, and will continue to do. (Applause).

It is vital to state today:

Homeland or death!

Socialism or death!

We will overcome! (Applause)

# **Cuba Reiterates Its Commitment To Solidary Cooperation Based On Mutual Respect Disinterested Help And Complimentarity**

**Speech held at an ECLAC session in Havana (May 8, 2018)**

Your Excellency António Guterres, United Nations secretary general:

Her Excellency Alicia Bárcena, ECLAC executive secretary:

Distinguished ministers, heads of delegations, delegates, and guests:

Allow me to welcome you to our country, which is honored to host this 37th period of session with all of you present.

I would like to emphasize the importance of this meeting that is being held on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of ECLAC. It has, moreover, been 10 years since Ms. Alicia Bárcena assumed the leadership of the Commission, and whose successes in this role are worthy of congratulations.

ECLAC, which for decades has served as a reference in terms of economic and social knowledge in Latin America and the Caribbean, on the regional and global level, has contributed decisively to placing equity at the center of development, showing that the region continues to be the most unequal on the planet, and studying certain structural causes of the problem that will surely be addressed in this meeting.

It is imperative to transform the culture of inequality associated with the colonial past of our nations, which particularly affects indigenous populations, Afro-descendants, girls, and women. It is also, in our opinion, the result of imperialism, neoliberalism, and macro-economic policies that for decades have favored transnational corporations, and exacerbated differences based on class, skin color, and between urban and rural regions and populations.

Likewise to be faced are serious challenges that include slow growth rates in productivity, the lack of diversified production, and low levels of technological modernization.

There is no other option but to advance in regional integration and development with equity, which would allow us to invert the pyramid seen in the principal countries of the region, where the richest 1% of the population holds an enormous portion of the wealth.

When, in February of 2010, we decided to create the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) with the countries of Our America, we emphasized the intention of promoting unity within diversity; we made a commitment to "concentrate social policy efforts on the most vulnerable

segments of the population, to respond to the challenge of poverty, inequality, and hunger; and achieve greater economic and social development for the people of Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of the non-discriminatory integrity and recognition of persons as a right. We will continue to press forward, therefore, will social development policies to ensure, within our national environments, a focus that prioritizes programs directed toward reducing poverty, inequality, and hunger.

The Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace charts a necessary course. We know there will be no development without peace, and no peace without development.

Esteemed delegates:

As the report prepared by CEPAL very well indicates, "Inequality has not only economic implications, but political, social, and cultural implications, as well."

The distribution of income and wealth constitutes a central element in closing this gap, and therefore guarantees on the part of states are needed to ensure access to food, work, quality education, health, culture, and better living conditions.

While it is true that, as the central theme of this meeting indicates, we must address "the inefficiency of inequality," the real objective must be "the search for equality of opportunity and social justice," and therefore, the reduction and elimination of the growing poverty that millions of Latin Americans and Caribbeans suffer.

Recent history shows that appropriate public policies lead to successful results in social progress and economic growth that have lifted tens of millions of people from hunger, illiteracy, and ignorance, as ECLAC reports indicate. It would be inadmissible and cruel to attempt to impose another neoliberal wave, like the one that has already set our people back a decade.

It is imperative to struggle to make a reality of the theme guiding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, that is, that "no one is left behind."

With the Paris agreement, the road could have been opened to confronting climate change, that affects us all in one way or another, but for Caribbean states, these threats are multiplied and impose enormous tensions on their economies, requiring special, differentiated treatment, and at the same time, more support, solidarity, and cooperation.

It is essential that when addressing the issue of inequality, we consider access to knowledge as well.

Information and communications technologies favor development. To reduce the gap between the haves and have-nots, between rich and poor

countries, it will be necessary to eliminate the difference between those who know and those who don't, between knowledge and ignorance.

We must work for use of these technologies that promotes social solidarity, creates values, and contributes to peace and the economic, cultural, political sustainability of our nations.

Likewise, we are obliged to constantly reflect on and analyze the growing monopolization of the media, and attempts to impose through them a single way of thinking, consumerism, the manipulation of people's behavior, and values far removed from the realities and aspirations of our countries.

Distinguished delegations:  
For our part, despite the difficulties facing the Cuban economy, very particularly caused by the tightening of the blockade imposed on Cuba for almost six decades, we will continue to focus on the development goals we have established to preserve, extend, and deepen the accomplishments achieved.

We are working on the crafting of a National Social and Economic Development

Plan through 2030, based on strategic axes in line with the Sustainable Development Objectives, as part of the process of updating our social and economic development model, begun in 2011, guided by the inviolable premise that no citizen will be left unprotected. We will never implement well-known shock therapies that only affect the most vulnerable.

In particular, we reiterate in this forum Cuba's commitment to solidary cooperation, based on mutual respect, disinterested help, and complementarity. Despite our needs and difficulties, we will maintain this intention, following the principle of sharing what we have, not what we have left over.

We have accepted the pro tempore presidency of ECLAC for the period 2018-2020, and of two subsidiary bodies: the South-South Cooperation Committee and the Latin American and Caribbean Countries Forum on Sustainable Development.

We do so fully committed and conscious of the challenges we face, focused on continuing to promote cooperation among countries in the region in making the new 2030 Agenda a reality. We will direct our efforts toward supporting ECLAC's vocation of advancing the search for a more just, equitable, and inclusive world that recognizes people as the fundamental element of sustainable development. We will make an effort to promote unity within diversity.

I would like to recognize the Mexican government for the work done since the 36th period of sessions, during its term as president pro tempore of the Commission.

I wish you success in the work sessions that will be held over the coming days and reiterate Cuba's firm commitment to ECLAC, to Latin American and Caribbean integration, to brotherhood and solidarity among our nations, and to the common struggle for social and economic development of Latin America and the Caribbean, reaffirming the belief of José Martí: "The good of many is preferable to the opulence of a few."

Thank you very much. (Applause)



# **Cuba's Support For The Bolivarian Revolution Is And Will Always Be Inalterable**

## **Speech on his official visit to Caracas (May 30, 2018)**

Compañera Delcy Rodríguez, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela's National Constituent Assembly;

Compañero Tareck El Aissami, Executive Vice President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela;

Distinguished guests;

Dear Venezuelan people;

Cuban compatriots:

It is an honor to speak before members of the National Constituent Assembly, and I convey, in the name of Cuba, our respect and great admiration.

(Applause)

I bring a strong embrace from Army General Raúl Castro Ruz (Applause), who has expressed his admiration for the popular victory won last Sunday, May 20, that was resounding. (Applause) And this is precisely the reason for our visit to sister Venezuela.

Personally, we feel much support – and that is what we expressed to President Maduro – when just two days after the National Assembly of People's Power in our country was held, when we took on the responsibility with which today we represent the Cuban people, the warm solidarity of Venezuela arrived right away, that of its people, the Bolivarian Revolution, and Maduro, with a delegation of figures from the Venezuelan government to visit our country – the first to visit following this National Assembly (Applause). We saw and appreciated this tremendous expression of support, of solidarity, of brotherhood, of friendship.

Sunday May 20, like many Cubans, like many Cuban families, we practically spent the day following what was happening in Venezuela on television, fully convinced that you would win, but we knew you were in a complicated situation as a result of the media campaign, the economic, financial war that U.S. imperialism has subjected this people to, and all this perverse desire with which they have wanted to overthrow the Bolivarian Revolution; but we knew that by accompanying you, we could also add strength. And following the Bolivarian people's experience on television, going to the polls to vote for the Bolivarian Revolution, for Maduro, for the continuity of the legacy of Chavez, we shared the reading of the paper ballot results.

Past 10:00 that night, when Maduro's victory was announced, we felt the victory as our own. (Applause) There are those who accuse Cuba of practices that we never use, of sonic attacks. Well, this day, there was a real, really loud sound across the island, for Venezuela's victory, for the victory of the Bolivarian Revolution. (Applause) And perhaps this joyful sound did bother many in the United States and other confines, including this right wing that is incapable of recognizing the legitimacy of a government elected by the people.

As soon as we heard the news, the Army General and I sent messages of congratulations and support to President Maduro. We immediately tried to make a telephone call to President Maduro, but when I asked that the call be made and went back to see what was happening here on television, Maduro was already at the mass event you were having, and I said, "Well, the mass event is going on now, let's wait until it's over, if that's possible. In the end, it was after midnight when we were able to talk with Maduro and tell him that Cuba's support for the Bolivarian Revolution is, and will always be, inalterable. (Applause)

I am also delivering an embrace from the Cuban people, who admire their Venezuelan brothers.

We are here to express respect for the sovereign decision made by the people of Venezuela.

Our solidarity with Venezuela, with the Bolivarian Chavista Revolution, with the civic-military union of its people, and with its President, Nicolás Maduro Moros, is inalterable.

The election of this Assembly was a demonstration of the people's support for the Bolivarian process, amidst acts of terrorism and violence that the country suffered, through which the people could see a way out, toward peace and dialogue.

In the world we live in – in which the latest trend is fake news and post-truths, manipulations, symbolic constructions that demobilize and promote individualism – it would appear that supporting Venezuela is not fashionable.

But they are not going to confuse us. We are here defending a sovereign choice of a people. And we will continue to do so. (Applause)

Venezuela has supported Cuba in many ways throughout its entire history.

The Bolivarian Chavista Revolution, the courageous Venezuelan people, President Nicolás Maduro have supported many nations in our region. We owe this country a debt of gratitude, since our independence.

Now Venezuela needs our solidarity; needs the backing of the peoples of Our America in its resistance to the criminal political, diplomatic, economic, and financial war of which it is a victim.

As Army General Raúl Castro Ruz would say, "Aggression and violence against Venezuela hurts all of Our America and only benefits the interests of those who are intent upon dividing us, in order to dominate our peoples, with no concern whatsoever for the incalculable consequences for the region of the conflicts generated, as we are observing in different places around the world."

We know well this hypocritical blaming of emancipatory ideas and popular governments for the problems caused by imperialist policies, sanctions, and acts to subjugate, harass, isolate, and blockade. No one can confuse us with humanitarian rhetoric.

We've almost seen it all before; the reduction and breaking of diplomatic relations, hypocritical resolutions from the corrupt, intolerable OAS, coordinator of financial sanctions and calls for a military uprising.

We must firmly repudiate attempts by the U.S. government to resuscitate the aggressive, old Monroe Doctrine, which aims to return the region to the era of interventionism.

The resounding electoral victory of Chavista forces in the Presidential elections this past May 20 constitutes a strategic victory for the Bolivarian Revolution and Our America. This victory of yours is also a victory for all of Our America (Applause), evidence of the peoples' political growth and a demonstration of the continuing relevance of the legacy of Comandante Chávez within the soul of Venezuela.

We sincerely admire the courage and audacity of Venezuelan revolutionaries, of the Bolivarian vanguard, and your civic-military union. We admire the political and moral stature of compañero Nicolás Maduro (Applause), his patience and flexibility, his intransigence toward those who relentlessly insult and attack his homeland.

Only a people that understands well the origin of its problems can stay the course amidst so much manipulation and lying, and provide an example like the one you Venezuelans have just given. Only a radically Bolivarian and Chavista government, like the one you have elected, can put the ideals of unity and continental integration first, in the face of betrayal.

At a time when malice proliferates, as some give up on working for the Greater Homeland, I recall what Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro Ruz said in this same city, some 60 years ago: "What must be done is realize the ideas of Bolívar." And all of us are going to realize the ideas of Bolívar. (Applause)

Latin America and the Caribbean must learn from the Venezuelan experience, because we cannot concede even a bit to imperialism, as Che said.

We are in Caracas today, in the cradle of The Liberator and Latin American and Caribbean unity. The only way to confront these challenges is to unite, within our own societies and among sister countries. Our region must unite, in all its diversity and focus on how to advance its integration, its sustainable development, and peace.

CELAC, Unasur, and ALBA-TCP are examples of what can be accomplished in terms of coming together. Of these organizations, ALBA-TCP, created by Fidel and Chávez, continues to be the nucleus of resistance to the imperialist, neoliberal offensive, acting in accordance with the postulates of the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace.

Compañeras and compañeros:

As Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro Ruz said, in the Central University of Venezuela's Aula Magna, February 3, 1999, "No one is in better conditions than you to struggle for something as important, and prioritized at this difficult time, for unity, integration, that is, for the survival, if you like, not only of Venezuela, but all countries of our culture, our language, our race. Now more than ever, the banner of "Homeland is humanity" must be raised, conscious that we can only save ourselves if humanity is saved: that we can only be free if we procure that humanity is free..."

That is why we are in Caracas today, in the name of the Cuban people and government, to be true to Martí in the service of Venezuela, as her sons and daughters.

Long live Venezuela! (Viva!)

Long live the Bolivarian Revolution (Viva!)

Long live Chávez and Fidel! (Vivan!)

Long live Maduro and Raúl! (Vivan!)

As we say in Cuba:

Homeland or death!

Venceremos! (Prolonged applause)

# **You Can Count On Cuba Today And Always**

## **Remarks on receiving an honorary medal in Venezuela (May 30, 2018)**

COMPAÑERO Nicolás Maduro Moros, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela;

Members of the delegations of Venezuela and Cuba:

With pride and reverence I begin to speak, as Martí said. I do so aware that, having been judged worthy of the Order of the Liberators of Venezuela, it is to Cuba, to Cuban men and women, to whom this immense honor is conferred.

I humbly receive it, on behalf of a heroic and noble people, and I interpret this as an act of undeserved generosity toward myself, and of just recognition to the Cuban people, who have followed, through glorious pages of sacrifice the preaching of Bolívar and Martí to make the dreams of independence and liberty of these heroes a reality.

It was Bolívar who envisaged from that distant era the threat posed by U.S. imperialism to genuine Latin American and Caribbean integration, which still has a long way to go to materialize, but which merits all our efforts.

The symbolism of this Order stems from the important contribution of Venezuelan brothers to the noblest causes of humanity, who made this land known as the cradle of revolutions.

This decision further encourages our commitment and solidarity with this brave Bolivarian and Chavista people, and our enthusiasm and dedication to work toward the best destiny for our nations. To do this, we must move forward with ongoing cooperation projects, identify new ones and reinforce our solidarity.

In this act I remember the Comandante en Jefe of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, who so admired and supported the Bolivarian process, and whom you deservedly distinguished with this honor; and also Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, honored with this Order and who has always had a connection of revolutionary faith with Venezuela, since its early struggles for emancipation, as he himself recalled when he was awarded here, to this minute.

Thus I pay tribute to they who maintained a sincere and loyal friendship with President Hugo Chávez Frías, who never bowed down or abandoned the struggle, and always trusted in the wisdom of Venezuelan revolutionaries to move forward; who upheld at all times, with courage and resolve, their ideas, their convictions and their truths.

Dear Nicolás:

I reiterate the gratitude to the people and government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. I receive this Order on behalf of the Cubans who are in solidarity with their Venezuelan brothers; of the Cubans who enjoyed the successes, charisma and extraordinary generosity of Comandante Chávez and his indelible revolutionary example and who, together with his beloved Venezuelan people, mourned his passing; on behalf of the Cubans who have enjoyed your victories, your talent and solidarity in the face of the aggression and siege of the imperialist and neoliberal right, aware that the revolutionary legacy is alive and vibrant in Venezuela.

I assure you, unhesitatingly, that no matter how big the difficulties and challenges may be, you can count on Cuba, today and forever.

Thank you very much (Applause).

# **Cuba Will Always Support The Just Demands Of Caribbean Nations**

## **Speech at the Caribbean Community Conference (July 5, 2018)**

Your Most Honorable Andrew Michael Holness, Prime Minister of Jamaica;  
Honorable Heads of State and Government of CARICOM member states;

His Excellency Ambassador Irwin La Rocque, CARICOM Secretary-General;

Distinguished heads of delegations, ministers and special guests:

It is an honor to greet the leaders of our Caribbean, a sea that we share as a cradle and a challenging home, where we count the hours with more haste, due to the passion that derives from its heat and its strength that stops hurricanes, increasingly frequent and destructive, and also due to the rise in sea level, as a consequence of climate change, which we ourselves did not even cause.

I follow the spirit of my people, who first send enthused gratitude to the hosts, as we are in Jamaica, where, in the late nineteenth century, far from the hatred of the Spanish metropolis, Mariana Grajales found refuge, the bravest of our women and Mother of the Nation, whom "God has invested with the rank of General," in the words of another front-line fighter, the wife of her son Antonio, the unsurpassable Maceo.

Here our Mariana, who died on Jamaican land 125 years ago, and today rests in the patrimonial cemetery in Santiago de Cuba, found refuge and received José Martí.

Jamaica is very close, geographically, historically, and humanly.

I wish, therefore, to express our gratitude to the people and government authorities of Jamaica, especially to Prime Minister Andrew Holness, for kindly organizing this meeting and offering us the possibility to share in this moment of Caribbean brotherhood.

I also interpret this invitation and the welcome that we have received, as an unequivocal demonstration of the excellent state of relations between the member nations of CARICOM and Cuba, whose solid foundations are built on an infallible friendship and the mutual recognition that we share challenges, so enormous that only united and cooperatively will we be able to face them successfully.

I am honored to convey the fraternal message of friendship and solidarity of compañero Raúl Castro Ruz, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee, and to reiterate the unwavering commitment that he made to you last December, at the 6th CARICOM-Cuba Summit, held in

Antigua and Barbuda, stating that, "The Caribbean can always count on the eternal friendship, gratitude, and support of Cuba."

"Cuba does not wander around the world cadging: she is a sister and works with such authority. On saving herself, she saves," warned José Martí when he organized the Necessary War. And the Cuban Revolution, which turned his legacy into law, has not hesitated to share what we have; offer what we know; support where we can; more so at difficult times than in fortunate moments, but simply always. With a single priority: firstly he who suffers the most, and if he is a brother all the more reason.

Esteemed Heads of State and Government and guests:

The challenge facing our small states to achieve sustainable development is not new, although it is intensifying, because the obstacles and dangers derived from an unjust international order, that has lasted too long, are even greater and more complex

An increasingly unequal world, in which the access of our products to markets is obstructed, and we are deprived of the essential technological and financial resources for development, while rivers of money and resources are squandered on military spending and endless wars beyond the borders of their promoters, where there is little room for the hopes of the nations that lost out on centuries of progress, fuelling that of our metropolises.

This is why Cuba will always support the just demands of the Caribbean to receive fair and differential treatment in access to trade and investment. And we will support, without hesitation, the legitimate demand for reparations for the horrors of slavery and human trafficking, while rejecting the inclusion of CARICOM member states on unilateral lists of alleged non-cooperative tax jurisdictions drawn up by international financial capital centers.

We also reiterate that the demand to foster cooperation based on the needs of developing countries, and on the basis of the historic debt as a result of colonialism, and not a mechanical and incomplete measurement of national income, is necessary and just.

As mentioned earlier, the effects of climate change and the progressive destruction of the environment threaten human survival, and cause natural disasters and phenomena to affect more intensely small island states. As such, we urgently need to find joint responses to face them and demand a fair, special and differential treatment.

Purposes and Principles of the Charter of the United Nations, such as the peaceful settlement of disputes, the prohibition of threat or use of force, the respect for self-determination, territorial integrity, the sovereign



equality of states, and non-interference in their internal affairs, are continuously violated, which constitutes a real danger that demands our strictest observance and will to uphold the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, a commitment signed in Havana in 2014 by the heads of state and government of the region.

We cannot ignore the serious and alarming messages of arrogance and contempt with which United States authorities address our nations.

The declared intention of a return to the Monroe Doctrine, a direct expression of its ambitions of domination, together with acts of intervention, which provoke violence, humanitarian crises, and instability, merit strong condemnation, just as the application of unilateral coercive measures and non-conventional war tactics, that have become a direct threat to the stability and true integration of our nations.

Esteemed Heads of State and Government:

Now 45 years ago, in a historic decision, the first four independent nations of the Caribbean reestablished diplomatic relations with Cuba.

That act would be described by the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, as an "unquestionably courageous political decision... [insofar as it] was a fundamental step toward breaking the diplomatic and trade blockade of Cuba in the region... Cuba will never forget this noble gesture on the part of its Caribbean brothers," Fidel said then and we reiterate today.

We will continue, with our modest resources and in spite of the current difficulties, joint cooperation projects.

We have the opportunity to further deepen our ties.

We will pursue efforts to start the activities of the Regional Arts School, whose conception is the result of common interest and political will.

We must, at the same time, make sustainable the advance of the Centre to Stimulate the Development of Children, Adolescents and Youth with Special Education Needs, located in the Cooperative Republic of Guyana.

Cuba ratifies the decision to continue cooperating in the training of human resources, in particular the possibility of pursuing specialization studies in the health field.

We maintain the will to exchange experiences and best practices in comprehensive disaster risk management, and in confronting the effects of climate change, and to explore other spheres of common interest.

We also have novel instruments that we must continue to strengthen, such as the expansion of the Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement

between the Caribbean Community and Cuba, which supports the promotion of trade and investment development; the possibility of working on multi-destination tourism and cultural exchange development. In other words: to make more systematic and constructive use of all of our scarce, but powerful, shared advantages.

Esteemed Presidents and Prime Ministers:

In Cuba we are advancing in a process of perfecting our socialist model of economic and social development, and working on the reform of our Constitution. We do so in the midst of economic difficulties and enormous financial tensions, exacerbated by the tightening of the economic, commercial and financial blockade, and the setback in bilateral relations with the United States.

Despite these enormous obstacles, the Cuban people persevere in building a sovereign, independent, socialist, democratic, prosperous, and sustainable nation, without abandoning any of the principles that have guided the honorable history of their Revolution.

In this context, Cuba would like to express its appreciation for the permanent support and friendship of the Caribbean peoples.

And before you, I wish to reiterate, in the name of our common history, of the present and future generations of Cuban men and women, the invariable solidarity, eternal gratitude, and irrevocable commitment of Cuba to its closest brothers, its equals in need and hope, given the good fortune and the challenge of sharing the Caribbean that embraces us.

Thank you very much!

# **Neither Cuban Public Media Nor Its Journalists Are For Sale**

## **Speech held at the Union of Cuban Journalists (July 14, 2018)**

Compañeros of the Party, state and government leadership here present;

Esteemed National Journalism Prize winners;

Dear journalists:

Following our most recent tours through several provinces and the days of this Congress, two scenarios that allow us to more closely share experiences and meditations with the national press, I have better understood why Fidel once asked you to consider him one of your own.

Cuban journalists have the indisputable merit of having upheld the voice of the nation in the most adverse circumstances and moments, with admirable loyalty, a great sense of responsibility, talent, intelligence, and contagious enthusiasm that always generates interesting proposals.

No less was and is expected of those who are proud to belong to a guild ennobled from its beginnings by intellectuals of the stature of José Martí, Fidel Castro, and the most brilliant leaders of the Revolution, from 1868 to the present day.

Today, after long and tiring years under the simultaneous siege of the most severe material shortages and the unacceptable lack of appreciation of some of our own sources, it is legitimate to recognize that the majority of you have had to struggle very hard to practice with dignity a trade that demands not only talent and effort, but also very elevated ideals, to reject - in the midst of great economic sacrifices - the offers of relatively "generous" payments that the lucrative industry of the campaigns against Cuba opportunistically and cynically makes available to those who have a price, or naively believe in the false libertarian discourse of market apologists.

We could say that the media landscape was never so challenging and demanding, but we would be unjust to the history of a Revolution that has known no respite in its arduous efforts to gain all justice and that, from the first day, as Fidel's phrase that has presided this Congress recalls, understood the central role of journalism in defense of a besieged fortress.

How to imagine the rapid advance of the Rebel Army without the numerous clandestine and guerilla press or Radio Rebelde? What would have become of the nascent Revolution without the brilliant "Operation Truth?" Wasn't the media war - that stole the name of the Apostle, broadcasting from an

airplane - overcome with technologies and new journalistic projects that revolutionized radio and television at the time and still today?

Thanks to the understanding that its truth needs journalism, Cuba was able to build a public media system whose main strength is you, the journalists, more efficient the more authentic, original and creative you are on telling the nation and the world the truth that "needs you."

What we can say now is that although the ICT revolution, the Internet era, and the tyranny of companies engaged in the communications business present us with increasingly greater challenges as an underdeveloped economy, the country has not submitted to the rules of its enemy, nor ceded its sovereignty in the name of swift modernity.

And that, no matter how many attempts we face to return us to the past of sensationalism and private press under new masks, neither Cuban public media nor its journalists are for sale.

I do not accuse unjustly. I point to the open war that is being waged against us from media outlets that, under the umbrella of better times in the always fragile relations with the powerful neighbor that despises us, have been escalating the attack on what unites us – the Party – and what defends us – our press – constantly discrediting both and attempting to fracture and separate what comes from the same roots and sprouts from the same trunk.

Alluding to the type of mission that these media outlets attempt to fulfill with surprising coordination, that belies their supposed freedom, M. H. Lagarde has depicted with irony but without euphemisms, the new class of leaders that are sold to us from these spaces. I recommend the complete reading of "The New Revolutionaries" of whom Lagarde affirms:

"... The new revolutionaries swear over and over again that they are not hirelings of official thought, but they accept scholarships in universities of the United States, or receive journalism courses in Holland, where surely they teach them to defend socialism in Cuba. We must assume that such courses and scholarships are free.

"The new revolutionaries call for disobedience when unity is most needed. For them, experts also in politics, the 'judicial' persecution of leftist leaders in Latin America, the soft coup and invasion attempts in Venezuela and Nicaragua, have nothing to do with Cuba.

"The new revolutionaries are democratic and respectful of opposing views, which is why those who do not share their positions are: submissive, sheep, obedient, mediocre, Taliban, Khmer Rouge, Stalinists, pro-government, and repressive.

"The main mission, therefore, of the new revolutionaries is to divide something that, without a doubt, they sometimes achieve."

Lagarde's text is just a little longer, but these ideas are enough, as they define the most urgent challenge of this era in this part of the world.

I know that the theoretical documents and debates of the Congress, without ignoring, forgetting or dismissing internal pressing needs, which, when all is said and done, are also strategic, have pointed to the centrality of this ceaseless battle between the selfish and exclusionary logic of capital, and our socialist and martiana, fidelista, solidary, and generous logic.

Because, although they sell us another version of the facts, the stubborn reality is too obvious, taking its painful toll on those who believed the wolf was a sheep.

It either is to be or not to be, since the times of Shakespeare.

Of course, the Congress has been much more than this central debate and we are glad. Firstly, it is worth celebrating that we arrive at this tenth edition with the Social Communications Policy, a document that defines, at last, the access to information, communications and knowledge as a citizens' right and as a public good; that grants the highest authority to press executives; that cross-cuts society and establishes obligations in this sense for institutions, bodies, authorities; that defends the values and symbols of the nation and mandates respect for the diversity that we are. That declares communications a strategic resource of the state and government leadership, and defines the public nature of broadcasting and communications services, and recognizes only two types of ownership of the mass media: state and social.

UPEC and the Faculty of Communications of the University of Havana have been an active part of the drafting of this policy and its adjustment and adaptation to the current times. Virtually the entire guild has participated in fundamental discussions for its subsequent application. There is enthusiasm in the Congress for the doors that open to historic and recent concerns of the sector, such as the management systems that grant greater autonomy to media outlets and their strengthening, ordering, technological renovation. I understand that those who are not invited to the analysis, as they are not part of UPEC, nor of the Cuban society that won with sacrifice and efforts the exclusive right to discuss how to design the future, are furious.

And, of course, we are not surprised that the hirelings of global monolithic thinking, in their Creole or foreign version, have begun to launch rivers of intrigue against the Party and the country's media system. What did they expect? What do they suggest? Perhaps that we surrender, for example,

our news agencies into the arms of the market, and their journalists to the street? Well no. Our Télam will not be bled. The International Monetary Fund doesn't rule in Cuba.

According to the reports I have received from the first days of the Congress, this has been a successful event, with shorter reports and solid and contributing proposals, based on the experience of the grassroots of the organization in the media and academia. I believe this is because UPEC has not ceased to function over recent years, not even in the most disconcerting and harsh, when you lost your natural and formal leader, brother Moltó, as I know you like to call him, for the spirit of camaraderie that he left as a work style and his special relationship with the rank and file at any level.

His brilliant definition of what UPEC is for, his battle to sign up youth in any fight Cuba faced, and even his ability to promote the computerization drive, the use of social media, and the concentrated use of the contributions of the Faculty, leave a roadmap along which the renewed national committee will travel from today, without breaking continuity.

The summaries of the commission will be a useful working tool to assume new media spaces, unafraid, creatively on the offensive, overcoming the technological advantages of the colonizing platforms with the talent and creativity that our fighting nature and the cultural and political heritage that Fidel left us, that Raúl and his compañeros of the historic generation continue to offer us.

I don't forget the strongest demands you have made: salaries, insufficient and anchored in old resolutions that must be discarded; the precarious material situation of the media and journalists, an issue where light is already beginning to appear at the end of the tunnel of our eternal scarcities, at least in the provinces, where the needs of journalists and their media have been taken into account with the use of 1% of the territorial contribution (local income).

No one is better prepared than you to understand that what is pending is much more than the need of a guild. It is the need of a people, noble and hardworking, whose human, heroic and moving stories are yet to be fully told. As the country that our media shows is to better resemble the country that we are. Material resources may be lacking, but never the moral resources and revolutionary ethics, which you contribute daily, that which Víctor Joaquín and Aroldo defend.

By defending these values, we are Cuba!

As I have asked you to consider me one of your own, I also feel a great responsibility in the great task that lies ahead of you and of us, the Party,

the state and the government, to settle our numerous debts with past and recent history, which at the same time are with the future.

Yes, the truth needs you. And the Revolution, Martí and Fidel taught us, is that truth bigger than ourselves.

We will be seeing each other on the path to that horizon that we owe ourselves.

Thank you very much. (Ovation)

# **Cuba Is Going For More**

## **Speech at National Assembly of People's Power (July 22, 2018)**

DEAR Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Party Central Committee; Compañeros Machado and Lazo;

Deputies;

Compatriots:

This historic session of the National Assembly of People's Power is being held precisely in the year in which we will commemorate the 150th anniversary of the beginning of Cuba's wars of independence, and as an expression of our current work to continue the revolutionary struggle that had distinguished us for more than a century and a half.

In addition to voting on the close-out report for last year's state budget, this meeting has great significance for two reasons: the approval of the proposed Constitution of the Republic and the presentation of the nation's Council of Ministers.

A bit more than three months ago, in this same hall, I assumed before you and the Cuban people the most honorable and challenging of the missions I have had: the presidency of the Councils of State and Ministers, a responsibility that only two other men have held, whose personal histories are at the same time the history of the Revolution.

Fidel, from the eternity where he now resides, was the recurring image during the minutes in which the solemn event took place that April 19. In those moments, I thought of him many times: I understood better his insuperable stature as a continental and world statesman, recalled some of his innumerable political and humanistic lessons, reconsidered his "qualities as a revolutionary conductor," and assumed as my own the Martí credo, the profound conviction that all the glory in the world fits within a kernel of corn.

Raúl, raising my arm, was then the conformation that we had a guide, whose support I have not been without a single day. I am, therefore, a fortunate president, not only because of the extraordinary people who I have the duty to serve, but because of the exceptionality of those who have preceded me. So how can I fulfill this mission?

Everything we have done and tried to do over these months is directed toward the primordial goal of serving Cuba, with ears to the ground and eyes wide open, as Raúl has asked of us, and with the spirit captured in a phrase stated by Fidel in February of 1959, when he spoke to the humble people of the country's east, asking, "What would you do, those who are



making these demands, if you were in power... you resolve the problems, since you are us and we are you, we are in power.”

Do you know what the demands of those people were? Houses, jobs, schools, teachers, hospitals, doctors...

The Revolution was barely a month old and plans were already underway to confront the rampant poverty that excluded millions of Cubans from the elementary benefits of a modern society.

All efforts seem insignificant in comparison to the accomplishments of those years. The road was no bed of roses. It had to be constructed, with all the risks implied by living, working, creating a country growing under threat. But we were able to do so. With all our shortcomings, needs, and errors, we surpassed nations with similar economic possibilities in practically all indices of human development. And we're going for more!

This is what we are seeking with the deep reform of our Constitution, obliged to undergo an update so that institutionality is strengthened, and with this, the economic and social model approved by the Sixth and Seventh Party Congresses. A welcome opportunity that obliges us to rethink ourselves as a nation and dig into the heart of our essence, with the participation of all, inspired by the men and women who immortalized Guáimaro, a Camagüey road town, which Martí declared sacred because the first Cuban Constitution was written in its territory.

We have debated the proposed Constitution of the Republic during several sessions. The prior study was very useful and worthwhile, and the debate held over these days. An impassioned, committed, critical, patriotic, and supportive debate, based on the humanism of Fidel and Raúl, the revolutionary sensibility and historic, cultural, and scientific arguments in the essence and fiber of the nation, which has recognized the work of the commission charged with the drafting and presentation of the Proposed Constitution, led by the Army General.

Debate also supported by a vibrant *aché*, as proposed by a deputy.

Once again, with healthy pride, we feel that in this Assembly we are also Cuba.

We can affirm that we have before us a proposal that will contribute, after the popular consultation and referendum, to strengthening the unity of Cubans around the Revolution.

Over the next few days, preparation will begin of selected *compañeros* in each one of the provinces to conduct the popular consultation process. This exercise of direct participation has great political importance and will be

another reflection of the fact that the Revolution is based on the most genuine democracy.

Active, conscious participation in discussion of the proposed Constitution of the Republic constitutes a weighty responsibility for all of our people.

All Cubans will be able to freely express their opinions and contribute to developing a constitutional text that reflects the present and future of the homeland.

To those who laid the foundation in the heat of battle for freedom with more morality and conscience than weapons to confront the adversary, and thanks to that won, because it was more important to be than to have, we owe this national civic act to develop a renovated Constitution, as an exercise that will unify, morally uplift, and invigorate the country's soul.

It is up to us now, institutions, educational and training centers, to take on the new task so that our boys and girls, adolescents, youth, and not-so-young delve into the history of constitutions, so that the people become more familiar with the Law of laws.

We must facilitate and insist on knowledge, among all components of current Cuban society, of this fundamental law, to corroborate and assert the conviction that we are a people who, along the arduous path through the most difficult years of our economy, did not lose our compass, the values that have sustained us for 150 years.

Compañeras and compañeros:

It is my responsibility, as agreed in the April constitutive session, to present a proposal for the Council of Ministers' members, of whom more than 30% are new.

Among the Council of Ministers vice presidents, maintained are cadres of experience and merit, recognized for the work they have done for decades in the service of the Revolution, and promoted to this position are Inés María Chapman Waugh, a courageous, intelligent Black woman, and Roberto Morales Ojeda, a firm, capable compañero, who assumed the responsibility of leading an institute and a ministry, respectively, with good results, despite the complexity and great demands placed on these two institutions.

The rest of the membership is completed with men and women who are retained in their positions, given the results they have obtained during these difficult years, which assures the necessary experience and continuity of this leadership body, while at the same time it is rejuvenated and renewed with the promotion of young cadre with proven track records, developing in their work as leaders.

Likewise, the Council of State agreed recently to designate a young, mixed race woman, compañera Yamila Peña Ojeda, to head the Attorney General of the Republic's Office.

As can be noted, changes in the composition of the Council of Ministers reflect the precepts of the cadre policy approved by the Party.

We congratulate all those who were promoted or reconfirmed to assume important responsibilities, and at the same time, I think it is only just to recognize, before the Parliament, the devotion to work and attitude maintained in fulfilling their duties by those who were relieved today of their positions and will take on new tasks.

The highest government body must carry out its work in this difficult juncture marked by a complex international panorama, in particular that of our region, analyzed extensively during the recently concluded São Paulo Forum, held in Havana, as well as the country's economic situation.

The performance of the economy in the first half of the year produced a discreet 1.1% growth of the Gross Internal Product, which is no less encouraging for being discreet, given the many adverse factors.

The situation of our external finances remains tense, as a result of the failure to achieve planned income from exports, tourism, and sugar production, in addition to damages caused by Hurricane Irma and the later occurrence of heavy rainfall, all of which had an impact on the delivery of raw materials, equipment, and supplies.

This situation obliges us to adopt additional control measures in regard to elements of the 2018 Plan, in the second half of the year, directed toward working with greater precision on decisions regarding imports and other hard currency expenditures. To achieve these goals, we must appeal for taking maximum advantage and making efficient use of the resources available.

In these circumstances, we must redouble efforts, and not renounce reaching the principal objectives established in the Plan, fundamentally those linked to guaranteeing basic services to the population and development, which presupposes directing work toward the strict control and rational, efficient use of all material and financial resources we have, saving here and there, wherever we can, eliminating any waste. This attitude must become a rule of thumb for government cadres in all arenas, in the first place among those of us on the Council of Ministers.

Addressing this juncture here will allow us, starting now, to lay the foundations for defining an economic plan for 2018 that is objective, realistic, and sustainable, based on solid, attainable foundations, and that prevents, despite difficulties, any slowdown in prioritized activities directed

toward growth and progress, while at the same time contributing to the gradual reestablishment of the nation's financial credibility.

The Council of Ministers which you approved will devote itself fully to the people and the Revolution, with a collective leadership and direction style, acting tirelessly, creating, and working to respond to needs and demands, in permanent and close collaboration with our humble, generous, honorable people to facilitate their participation in revolutionary tasks and decision-making.

We will encourage the practice of a style of work that brings the work of the central government closer to local governments, favoring the elimination of obstacles and bureaucratic mechanisms that delay decisions; we will maintain accountability reports by leaders and government institutions and systematic reviews of development programs, and defend public health, education, and the national culture, social communication, computerization, research and innovation as pillars of our governmental work.

We will maintain and at the same time call for the unleashing of an ethical battle against corruption, illegalities, addictions, and anti-social behavior.

We know we can count on the unconditional support of citizens when we confront the pernicious impunity of delinquent groups that hoard scarce products and resell them at speculative prices to enrich themselves without scruples or limit, using resources subsidized by the state, to the detriment of the needs of those who have the least, who are those who most support the Revolution.

The struggle against any manifestation of corruption and poorly done work must not be seen as an effort to be undertaken by the government alone, or the police; the resolute response to this phenomenon is the task of the entire society as a whole, which cannot allow a few to snatch from us the great accomplishments won by the Revolution for all.

I reaffirm what I said during this legislature's constitutive session: "We must continually work to uphold unity, discipline, comprehensive analysis, and rigor in all organizations, bodies and institutions; in order to ensure that the great potential and opportunities that exist in our society are sustained and expressed in concrete results for growth, development, and prosperity."

Thus, there is not much more to say, but, yes, much to do - a great deal to resolve, correct, strengthen, and create.

Our commitment is to return before you with results, as the country is entering its first 60 years of Revolution.

It will not be easy, because the principal obstacle to our development, the economic, commercial, financial blockade, and its enormous extraterritorial impact, are still here, like Monterroso's dinosaur.

But, wasn't it more difficult for the patriots who 150 years ago went into the scrub, even burning their own homes to oust the colonial empire, and for those who 65 years ago attacked a fortress practically without weapons or combat experience? And for those, who beat but not defeated, came out of prison and into exile, from exile to the Granma, from the Granma to the Sierra, and from the Sierra and the underground to the victory of hope, which we have spent 60 years defending?

Cuban men and women:

With such a history, all we can do is persist... struggle and struggle, always onward to victory.

Homeland or death! Venceremos!

(Ovation)

# **We Have Resolved To Strengthen The Government Of, And For, The Cuban People**

**Interview conducted by Patricia Villegas and broadcasted by Telesur (September 16, 2018)**

**Patricia Villegas:** From the Palace of the revolution in the city of Havana, in Cuba, we greet the president of this country.

Thank you very much, President Miguel Díaz-Canel, for accepting this invitation from Telesur. We are simultaneously in Telesur in Spanish and in Telesur in English.

You've been in office for four months. How would you rate those months? What have they meant to you?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** Patricia, first of all a greeting to Telesur, for the audience of Telesur, a channel that plays such an important role in the generation of the exalting content that our America needs. I believe that it has been months of great experience and months that also provoke a lot of reflection.

After the conclusion of the Assembly of Constitution of the Ninth Legislature of the National Assembly of People's Power, in which there was a speech that, in my view, is a keynote speech by Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Party, we started to study, to reflect on the guidelines posed by that speech, and we did a group exercise in the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers and after with all the Council of Ministers, to see that what we brought for the work of the government, and we draw several conclusions that are what we have tried to implement:

First, respond to the concept that it is a government of the people, for the people, which is the same as being a government for the Revolution, and then we propose four fundamental pillars in the boxes, and what we have shared with the pictures: One, in addition to the example, the boxes have to be in ability and attitude to give an account of your management at different levels of government and, above all, to the people.

A second element has to do with the connection, the debate and the permanent dialogue with the population and that we are where the most complex issues are, in the places where there are also the most complications.

A third pillar is that the cadres, the leaders in Cuba, be able to use social communication as a fundamental weapon, as a working instrument.

**Patricia Villegas:** Is there going to be a momentous change in the Revolution?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** Now we are in the middle of an implementation of the approved Social Communication Policy, and I think it will update our entire media system, but also, more than the media and only journalism, the communication culture that the country needs.

**Patricia Villegas:** The communication offer in general?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** The communication offer in the interactivity between the people and the government through the media, social networks.

We are aspiring to be able to declare a first stage of presence in the Electronic Government of the country, which has a lot of its foundation in all the digital platforms that from the government allow interactivity with the population and, therefore, the participation of the population through these platforms in decision making.

**Patricia Villegas:** The population at many times has been hypercritical with the revolution in its way of communicating, is that going to change, is that going to be transformed?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** I think that, first, the Cuban press, in the conditions in which it has had to face the communicative challenges of the revolution, has been a press that has defended the revolution with a lot of professionalism and I would say with efficiency. But we have also had expressions of perhaps too much apology at times; at times we have not been able to reflect on some issues on the public agenda either. In other words, I think we still have to bring the public agenda more into line with the media agenda.

But the whole role of the content generation is important. Today in the world the demobilizing and perverse contents of the colonial restoration platforms that they try to impose on us prevail. And I always say: if we have a fundamentally young audience whose communication codes are not traditional media, but social networks and those social networks are full of content that misrepresents the reality of our peoples, that also disrupt the identity and culture of our people, it is necessary that we are able, from our communication platforms, to flood with the exalting content of our people.

**Patricia Villegas:** Is it your concern to communicate with the younger sectors of Cuban society? Do you feel that somehow they are not...?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** I think it's a necessity of Revolution. Fidel was a standard bearer of that, Fidel went to the universities when he wanted to

discuss a problem. The meetings in the Plaza Cadenas of the University of Havana in the early years of the Revolution are famous.

For me it has been a necessity since I was a youth leader, when I developed as party secretary in two provinces and when I served as Minister of Higher Education that way to the young people who always bring you so much, refresh you so much, and know their aspirations and also their willingness to participate and to propose.

Therefore, this communication is a third pillar that should be in the exercise of the cadres.

The fourth pillar is that those of us who lead take into account that the solutions to the problems we have are very complex, therefore, we cannot talk about an alternative, we always have to face each complexity with several alternatives. Fidel postulated that concept, and the only way to make it more effective is to go to scientific research, seeking from research, innovation, because many times we investigate and do not specify. And that scientific research turned into innovation and the computerization of society, used as tools for solving problems, is also one of the pillars that each leader defends in his way of acting, in his way of doing.

**Patricia Villegas:** Is your decision to go to the provinces, to meet people in the streets based on these four pillars? I have seen images in the last hours of his time in one of the Cuban provinces, people greet him, give him letters, ask him to solve problems and, even, President, I have heard something that is not very usual to listen to the leaders, to the people who are in function of governments, and that is "there are problems that we will not be able to solve", it is an expression of absolute sincerity to the recognition that there are problems that overflow us. How to explain it?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** All this has a lot to do with the reflections that I told you we made of the speech of the Army General. We realized that we had a link that we had to strengthen in the management of government, which was the interrelation, how to seek greater interrelation of the central government with the territorial governments, with the local governments, with the provincial governments.

**Patricia Villegas:** It has to do with you coming from the province.

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** I think it is very good that any Cuban leader who reaches national leadership links has had the experience of the provinces, the experience of the territories. Because in a territory the national programs are defended at the same time, the fundamental programs for the revolution, but we must defend and develop and create according to the problems of the communities, the problems of the localities, and that is an element that has a lot of weight now, the autonomy that we want to



give to local governments in the text of the draft constitution that is being debated.

Then I said: we Reflect on the theme of strengthening the relationship central government-territorial governments and local; we gave powers to the First Vice president of the Councils of State and Ministers to have a formal structure that directly addresses the relationship of the central government to the territories. Therefore, the governments of those territories already know that they can go directly to the Office of the First Vice-President or to my office to find the solution or to let us know about problems that go beyond the framework of what they can achieve.

And to complement that relationship, we then established, among other mechanisms, this system of visits. We are trying to arrive with visits of the Council of Ministers, in composition of the Council of Ministers, at least two visits to provinces per month, so that in a year we can, at least, visit the province twice.

The National Assembly of people's power, with its working committees, systematically visits the territories. All this gives us a background, it gives us a Bank of problems to solve, it also gives us a Bank of the spectrum of how the thinking is, the disposition, the moods and allows us to talk to people about all this.

And when it comes to solving problems I always say: first, the construction of that dialogue has to be honest and it has to be on the basis of truth, on the basis of argumentation.

**Patricia Villegas:** Have you changed your perception of what the country's problems were after these tours of the provinces or do you confirm, say, the central problems of Cuba?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** I believe that the central problems are confirmed, we can attend to the particularities, but, above all, we can unlock, we can make the solution more dynamic.

I say, there are problems that are so large that they do not have an immediate solution in its entirety, but every day, if we serve you well, we can start a bit to the problem in your solution and, therefore, the problem does not grow, but that we will be pulling out clumps and that constant action generates a synergy of confrontation and a solution, and don't stop, go on.

There are other problems that can be solved right away, because it establishes a bureaucratic decision, the lock does not care or not sensitivity to a problem, that we connect the people in that dialogue, and in that meeting, and there are problems that honestly will have to explain to the people that exceed the possibilities of the country at this time.

**Patricia Villegas:** Why, why do they exceed the possibilities of the country?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** I believe that the main obstacle to the development of the country, the thing that most affects the daily life of Cubans and also economic and social life is the blockade. The blockade imposed by the United States, which is a brutal practice, I would say an act against humanity, attacks a people. It is a people condemned to die of hunger, to die of want; it even violates the territorial integrity, imposes rules in the world's relationship with Cuba that are totally extraterritorial, and that have intensified a lot at the moment and where there is also an enormous financial persecution. So, the flow of capital, the flow of investments to Cuba, costs a lot of work, for those who have the greatest will, because there are many pressures on the part of the United States government towards that, and it is a blockade that we have been dragging on for 60 years.

One says, well, my generation, that we were born in the first years of the revolution, just because we were born in Cuba is a blocked generation. Our children, our grandchildren are generations born under conditions of blockade, which imply conditions of resistance.

I think that there is also a recognition of the heroism of how a small town, not blocked by anyone, locked by the most powerful nation on the planet, has been able to resist, and has been able to build their own platform, emancipatory, that exalteth himself a lot, and I believe that there is an expression not only of resistance, but of victory.

**Patricia Villegas:** How much percentage, in your opinion, has this construction, let's say, of solutions to the problems that people are raising in the provinces and in the capital now and before, the blockade and what commander Raúl Castro called "freeing the knots"? How much of your own, internal knots?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** I think that the blockade affects a lot, because look, every time you go to analyze a relationship or an aspect of the economic and social life of the country and start trying to distinguish what the obstacles are, many of the obstacles are directly associated with the blockade; but other obstacles, which are the subjective ones, which can be of the behavior, of the way of acting, many times have been conditioned by the distrust that the blockade creates and by that insistence that the blockade forces you to act as defending yourself constantly and analyzing a lot what step you are going to take, so that they can not destroy you.

So, that generates, sometimes, a slowdown in decision-making, in the way of facing things. People are very committed that whatever they are going to do does not affect the country, that it does not weaken it, and, in the

end, there is an explanation for the blockade in everything. Therefore, someone may say: they are obsessed with the blockade. No, I think those who have been obsessed with blocking us are the American governments. We want to live in the normal conditions of a country. We're not a threat to anyone. What we have is a Will and a vocation for social justice, to build a better world, to build a better country. And even that vocation for social justice that we have always had, now in the current conditions we want to accompany it with a society that has prosperity, and the main obstacle to that is the blockade.

**Patricia Villegas:** Let's talk about the constitutional reform project. If a fundamental action to avoid the prosperity to which the Cuban people aspire and which is expressed to you both in the provinces and in the capital is the blockade, then why are they discussing a new Magna Carta? Why are they checking in, if a fundamental factor comes from the outside?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** The question is interesting and relates many elements of our reality.

Well, it's not up to us to lift the blockade, it's up to the United States government. Therefore, we cannot subordinate our desire for Achievement, our desire for social justice, for prosperity to what a foreign government can exercise as a policy. We are aware that we depend on our own strength, our commitment, our will and our effort.

In recent years we have had a very intense debate, since the Sixth Party Congress, after powered on the Seventh Congress of the Party over the issues of the economy and the society, and have arrived at conclusions very important that we have to update our Economic and Social Model taking into account the stage of the lock. Everything would be more favorable without a blockade, therefore, we are preparing and trying to do better in the worst case scenario, which is in the scenario of the blockade, and we have taken a group of decisions that update The Economic and Social model: a non-state sector of the economy has been conceived and recognized...

**Patricia Villegas:** That grows a lot.

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** It grows, which is a complement to the state's economy, and it is not the sector, let's say, private, neo-liberalism, is a non-state sector, a private sector that complements what is done from the state-owned company, that has a relationship with the state-owned company or with the State, which is in the Plan of the Economy and in our planning, how much it contributes to the Gross Domestic Product that sector, how much to invest in this sector to have facilities to produce or provide a service and how much it represents the percentage of the labour force in the country. Therefore, it is implicit in our economic programming,

in all our projections, and it is a sector that I would say is mostly committed to the Revolution.

We have gone further, not only have we recognized private property and the existence of that private sector, but we have advanced in the management from some parts of state property by non-state forms; that is, there is state property that is given, without giving up the property, so that it can be managed by non-state forms, either by private workers or by cooperatives.

In these times we have broadened our vision on Civil Rights, Human Rights. We are complying, because we have signed, and we feel committed, different agreements at the international level that were not truly expressed in our Constitution, and also the way of thinking of Cubans on issues that were previously taboos or were issues that were assumed from another position, today they are with another focus, especially in the young population. And that already led us, we even began to enter not into a total contradiction, but into a limitation...

**Patricia Villegas:** At a crossroad?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** At a crossroad from what is Institutional with the things in which we are trying to experiment, which we are trying to move forward. Constitutional reform was therefore necessary. And that constitutional reform, first, reinforces a group of our postulates, of our convictions, that maintains state property as the fundamental property, even if it combines other forms of property. A whole range of Rights is being broadened and, of course, the party's role as the leading force in our society continues to be recognised.

And we also seek to achieve more autonomy of the municipal governments, to solve these problems of functioning of the central government, a more coherent structure in the forms of government.

**Patricia Villegas:** Is it a more pragmatic view of the country, of its reality?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** I think it's a responsible look, it's an objective look, it's a realistic look.

I believe that this is one of the most innovative elements, which was already expressed in the guidelines approved at The Sixth Congress and ratified more widely at the Seventh Congress, which is very well outlined in the conceptualization of the Cuban economic and Social model and which now has, let us say, legal support, from the draft constitution, is the autonomy of the municipalities. If we're going to give autonomy to the municipalities need not have a provincial structure representative that limit what you can do as an exercise in the development of local representativeness city, and that's why we are proposing to modify, and

stop at the level of province, a government coordination, coordination, administration, and that the representative is in that municipality.

**Patricia Villegas:** That is, let's say, a vision of the state administration, but these are not necessarily the issues, let's say, that are generating the greatest debate in the Cuban population regarding this new draft constitution.

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** I think people understand it, they assume it as a necessity, they don't see it as a setback, on the contrary. And rather the debate on these issues at some point is whether the word of Governor or mayor is adequate or not, it has to do with historical reasons.

**Patricia Villegas:** And also with another word, whether the country is going to remain communist or not. Did Cuban society renounce being a communist society?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** Here I think we have to link elements of conviction, elements of philosophy and science, elements of theory, which we cannot deny, and also objective elements. I don't want to go into that, I'm not a specialist in that, but what you've studied and what you're trying to argue about, if you go to classical Marxism, the mode of production that we aspire to is communism, so communism and socialism are intimately related. If you want to build socialism it is because you want to get to communism, and if you talk about communist construction you are understanding that you have to go through socialism.

**Patricia Villegas:** You don't understand it as a resignation then.

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** I don't understand it as a resignation. I understand that either term implies the other. Now, if we are going to look for a Constitution that is closer to what is objectively possible today, today we are closer and it is the immediate purpose of socialist construction, which is still a complex and broad construction.

To aspire to communism we would have to aspire to a construction that does not depend on a single country, that depends on an international construction, on a world construction.

I have the experience of having participated in several assemblies of popular debate when we have gone to the last visits to the territories-there is so much wisdom in our people, there is so much responsibility in how the people have assumed that debate, that it ratifies to me something that a poet friend told me: none of us knows more than all of us together. And once, on one occasion, he said to me: there can't be so many wrong people.

I believe that the text, which today is a good text, which people recognize is a good constitutional text, will be strengthened when we include the

aspects that this popular debate is already providing, and the last word will be taken into account based on what the people raise.

**Patricia Villegas:** At the vote in February. But one also wonders, President, why, if the revolution is even being able to revise itself in its aspiration to the construction of a communist or socialist society, other issues that are also controversial are not reviewed, such as, for example: the leadership of a single party, in this case the Communist Party. Why doesn't that get into the debate? Or did he come in and we don't know?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** Patricia, here's an interesting thing, which sometimes makes you laugh. Those who are most concerned about whether it is going to be socialism or communism are not even the Cuban people, they are those who detract from us from the outside. Now there are people who have more aspirations of communism or socialism than ourselves, when all the life we have been attacked with that, and this shows the double standards, double standards there are also times when it comes to addressing the Cuban reality and not see these historical particulars.

I think that all the issues in the Constitution are under discussion, some with a more accepted Majority; others in which there is a minority that does not agree, and others in which consensus is being built because there is a diversity of opinions.

The theme of the "leading role" of the Communist Party in our society, that we do not waive, and which is supported by the majority of the people, has to do with reasons of historical foundations, and sometimes do not understand the Cuban reality, because you always try to see the position of the Party, or the role played by the Communist Party of Cuba in the society of ours as an electoral party, and that is that in the conditions of Cuba, the Party is not electoral, has to do with historical roots. Martí founded the Cuban Revolutionary Party, which is the basis of what is now the Communist Party of Cuba from the historical point of view, not by seeking a party for elections. Martí looking for a party to confront and develop the revolution that he would have the independence and sovereignty of the country on the basis of the unit, a party that was totally open and democratic to include the interests of the majority in function of the independence and sovereignty and not to give chances to tears, not to give chances to disunity.

In our history the theme of unity, the necessary unity, is very marked. When you go through our history, when we have had gaps in unity, when unity has been fractured, we have had the setbacks, we have suffered the setbacks. The First War of Independence, which was the Ten Years ' War, a long war, its beginning we will commemorate it in October, the 150th anniversary of its beginning. On the centenary of the beginning of that war,

Fidel defined something that is extremely important: the revolution in Cuba has been one. That is why the element of continuity is there well conceptualized, and that feat not only marked the beginning of the wars of independence, but also marked the beginning of the struggles of the Cuban people, and it has been a single struggle in all these years.

That struggle, that Ten Years' War, which was a long and heroic war did not end with a victory precisely because of the disunity that there was in the end and ended with a pact with Spain.

Then another campaign of independence was resorted to, and a war, which was called the Chiquita War, did not become a great war also because of disunity.

After a pro-independence feat such as that of 1895, where the concept of José Martí's political thought was already there, with the participation of the Cuban Revolutionary Party as the axis, as the leader of that war, it ended with an American intervention, with a mediated Republic, precisely because of the lack of unity. In the midst of the mediatized Republic a revolutionary, progressive movement with deep convictions is generated, which brought together the best of the intelligentsia and the Cuban youth in the 30s, in what was known as the revolution of 33, and there is a popular saying of those times that says: The Revolution of 33 went to bolina. Well, he went to bolina because the unit was missing, too.

The Revolution triumphs with the convergence of various forces, Fidel unifies these forces, brings on a long-term process, in the first years of the Revolution, to the unit within the Communist Party of Cuba, and the Communist Party of Cuba, then, is not a party of elections, is a party of revolution, is a people's party, is a party to achieve the unity.

I am convinced that the enemy of the Cuban Revolution knows that its main bet to defeat the revolution must be to fragment our unity and that is why it is directing its main proposals for subversion. And where are they headed, which sector of the population fundamentally? To the young. Why? Because today we have a generation in which there is a temporal difference of more than 60 years already with the historical moment in which the Revolution triumphs. It is therefore a generation that has already assumed the gains of the revolution as rights.

**Patricia Villegas:** They see them naturally.

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** It looks very natural, he who lived in the first years of the Revolution; or, my generation is a generation that lived the first years of the Revolution, saw the hardness of those years, he saw how the country has progressed with the politics of Revolution, how we had, say, a stage very stable progress in the 80s, and later, after the collapse of

socialism, we fell in the special period. But today's generation of young people, our children, our grandchildren were born in a special period and have lived in a special period. We have to understand that separation...

**Patricia Villegas:** And isn't that generation, president, just aspiring to greater diversity, to other political parties, to other media, to other electoral offers, to communicate and connect with globality?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** That generation has many aspirations; it has many aspirations, above all focused on that the country will develop faster, because it is a generation that has been raised by the Revolution, which has had the benefit of the general education and university education, which has had the ability to assume the culture; that is, it is a generation, I say unto thee, cultured, educated, and therefore has aspirations, it is an active generation, is a generation that is involved. I think that the main challenge of this generation is not to be against the state or against the Revolution, and an important part, most of that generation is identified with the Revolution and the Party, and that it is not their issue; their issue is that there is more progress, speed up processes of progress; its theme is to take and to take into account, on how to engage, how to bring more. It also has aspirations for technological development, it has aspirations for the development of computerization. It's a very sharp generation towards social communication and towards the way we do...

**Patricia Villegas:** Wouldn't you aim for more? I'll say it that way, Mr. President.

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** It is a generation that also has elements of diversity, but it is a generation that is aware that it loses all the benefit that the revolution has given it as a generation if we lose unity. Therefore, it is a generation that has firmness, it is a generation that does not want divisions, it is a generation that does not give relief to break with the Revolution, and it is a generation that is not in favor of annexation, it is a generation that defends the independence, sovereignty, and who want to consolidate, and I think that it is a generation that is going to give continuity to the Revolution.

**Patricia Villegas:** Among the many issues that the new Cuban constitution would bring, there are two that also generate contradictions, polemics, about which there is much talk outside, there are many headlines, and one of them has to do with the limit of property and the limit of wealth. What is your position on this?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** I do not want to prejudice the debate that we are doing at the grassroots level, with a particular view, in addition, because I am part of the Commission, directed by General of the Army, was held responsible for the National Assembly to Draft the Constitution, therefore,



I agree with everything that is in that Project, as will also tell you that I agree, I am open to everything that we can improve in the Draft Constitution, from us to incorporate what the people are contributing.

Now, for example– and this is very much related to the things we talked about earlier–there is a very important pressure among those youth and also among the rest of the people to defend the concepts of social justice and equality that the revolution has built. So people, legitimately –I think this is a legitimate position–are very concerned about the concentration of property and the concentration of wealth.

**Patricia Villegas:** Is there in Cuba? Has this happened with the implementation of the economic model?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** Here I believe that there is no favorable space for there to be concentration of property and wealth, based on the things that we have regulated and that we have established and in the way we function. What happens is that, in the midst of the economic situation that we have, where the wage has lost a little bit of its power, where we have relations of wage-prices that are complex –and all of this also goes back to the topic, among other things, the lock– where there are people who receive certain income, not just associated with the work, which for us is an uplifting aspect and is the primary route by which individuals are distinguished in dependence of the contribution and that the contribution is for what they get, then the people, with all of that vocation, with all that legitimate aspiration, defend that there is no concentration of property and that there is no concentration of wealth.

What's wrong? That in one article it is explicitly stated that the concentration of property will not be allowed, and when this article was written we always conceived that not allowing the concentration of property, we did not concentrate wealth. In other words, we had the mechanisms in the law that would later support the Constitution in that regard to have control of property and wealth.

In the popular debate people are not saying to remove the article, people are saying to emphasize that there is no concentration of property and also explicitly add that there is no concentration of wealth.

I always say that in the debate on the Constitution, not only are people providing elements for the text, but people are providing elements that must be taken into account later in how we are going to implement the Constitution with the laws. There will have to be a broad legislative exercise –for which we are already preparing– to draft and submit for approval the laws that should support the Constitution so that there are no loopholes.

So, here we are in the debate, and understanding what people are asking, what is it that has to be in a constitutional text, which is a law, say, a minimum, or will be, are the highest aspirations, but expressed to a minimum, so that the other things are more extensive in the laws and the procedures that support the laws.

I think in the end, where the argument goes... Of course, the discussion in which we are about a month ago, still lacks the contribution of very important sectors such as the student sector, the youth sector, the academic sector, the scientific sector, because now the course has begun; but I do believe that this, undoubtedly, is an article in which we are going to have to stop and find the formulations.

Because, notice, it is not an article in which we have contradiction in content, that is, we all agree, or most agree that the concentration of property and wealth must be limited; the discussion is at the level of what should be in the Constitution and what should be in the laws and procedures. And there, as in all, I believe that debate and popular wisdom are the ones that will say the last word.

**Patricia Villegas:** Did you imagine, President, the reaction of the conservative sectors in Cuba, for the issue that appears in the new Constitution the recognition with civil rights to marriages or unions of persons of the same sex?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** This is a debate that has been established a lot in recent years, because the country has been changing, conceptions are also changing, the country is evolving; we are not in a glass bubble and, in addition, we are living realities. The very emancipatory will of the Revolution also opens up perspectives of thought. There is a humanist vocation in the sense of the action of the Revolution and, therefore, I would tell you that in these years we have lived there has been a tremendous evolution in thought, many taboos have been broken that were previously very established things, and I think there is a youth that pushes this a lot, because they see certain social problems in a different way.

Look, I told you earlier that with these criteria that I am giving on specific articles I do not want to prejudice the debate, because, in addition...

**Patricia Villegas:** No, but the churches have given their opinion publicly on that article. It is valid to know what the president thinks.

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** You have your ideas, you have your convictions, but you are also open to what that popular dialogue brings, because we have not done it for an exercise in artistically constructing a fictitious or theatrical stage; we have done it out of conviction, because in the history of the

Revolution itself, every time we have brought things to popular debate we have strengthened revolutionary action.

**Patricia Villegas:** Do you agree?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** I agree. What I think, above all, the approach of recognizing marriage between people, without limitations, responds to a problem of eliminating any kind of discrimination in society, of not leaving room for any kind of discrimination in society.

What's wrong? That people will see other items that are around to recognize that kind of union: a few, first to defend the subject from the semantic point of view, from the point of view of a native, that if the word marriage comes from the array and if the array is of a mother, and is a concept that for some people is very valid and is to be respected; others, then, we see concerns from elements that would be associated after adoption of children, the responsibility of that marriage, family responsibility.

**Patricia Villegas:** And civil rights.

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** And civil rights.

There are other positions that mark some elements of culture still to people, the thought of people, typical of tradition. And, I would say, with that honesty, then the different positions are coming out.

In the end I argue that there is no discrimination, and that is one of the types of discrimination that sometimes have been, not established by laws or a lot less, but have been in the conduct of our society, even though much progress has been made in these times and there are people and institutions that have played a key role to open those horizons with regard to the understanding of these social problems, which are problems in the world of the conception of humanism.

But I tell you that the last word will be given by popular debate and the wisdom with which our people build the right consensus on that aspect.

**Patricia Villegas:** The counterrevolution is calling for a vote against the constitutional project.

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** Yes! I call that the opinion of an exercise citizen as responsible as this, the view that one can have more favourably on an article or another, can't take the responsibility as a set of Constitution we must assume, because if you call the dialog, the dialog is among several, at least two people, therefore one has to say: I have my ideas, but there are others that can give you other ideas; but in the end I subordinate myself to the need of the country, which wants to build the country, and not by imposition, stubbornness or pride to say: No, if you don't include this, which is an element that is not even the most important, I'm not going to vote in

favour of the Constitution, or they'll condemn the adoption of the Constitution to only one position. I believe that we all have to review the mistakes that, as responsible citizens, it is our duty to do, moreover, when we have had the opportunity to give all our opinions.

**Patricia Villegas:** Are you confident that you will vote positively on the new Constitution in February?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** I think the majority will approve it, because the debate is not an imposed conviction, the debate is leading to that.

You told me of the counterrevolution. Remember that the Cuban counterrevolution, that minority that is against the revolution in Cuba does not respond to a national project, does not respond to a desire to improve the country from a position of sovereignty and independence; that counterrevolution is, above all, annexationist, it is an annexationist swarm; this counterrevolution is paid for and financed by the U.S. government, in more covered forms or in more uncovered forms, and has very little... although they can participate, they can be there in the assemblies, they are neighbors like everyone else, although many prefer to be outside Cuba and it is not recognized, it does not have social support. Usually when they express a hurtful idea against the People, against the Revolution, people give their views contrary to those positions.

I have participated in six discussion meetings. A part of the Foreign Press that is always very incisive towards the Cuban reality, when we went to the constitutional project began to sow the matrix that, in Cuba, and especially in the young people, there was apathy for the Constitution, that it did not interest the people.

Now what do you see? We have made three editions of the tabloid of the constitutional reform and it runs out. You even go to places that are further away, maybe to communities and mountains and people ask you to get more tabloid.

You take part in those assemblies and everyone carries the tabloid, the people with scribbles, in the best sense, that is, the symbols or the signs that one makes.

**Patricia Villegas:** With the text studied.

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** The text studied, underlined; there are others, as I had to do, that with an engineering thought each thing to look for interrelations makes diagrams in block. And people participate in a very entertaining, very serious, very committed way in that debate.

I say: if someone is not interested in that, if someone is apathetic to that, what do they want the tabloid for, why mostly people...?

**Patricia Villegas:** You think that it is indeed a structural debate today in Cuban society.

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** Yes!

Another element of the debate: Many people, especially older, see the Constitution not only important to the today of the country, but for the future and are very concerned about how the Constitution gives you the space you need to Cuban youth, and it shows that there is a commitment to continuity; and, on the other hand, how young people are involved. Young people bring very interesting ideas, but, in addition, in many assemblies I have seen that one of the first interventions is a young person who expresses more than what the text of the Constitution is saying, expresses his support for the Constitution from the position of young people.

**Patricia Villegas:** We'll see what happens in that front, President, in February, which is when people are going to vote, right?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** It's clear.

Patricia, an anecdote occurred to me, because I did it with an element of sincere action, without even trying to impose anything in an assembly and then it had a certain impact, I say, positive in the people. I am in a work center, there is a compañero that raises the inclusion, I wanted to expand an article and at the end I, for that there would be confusion, because I respected his judgment, of course, I said, "Look, the only thing that I ask you to observe that there is another article at a later stage where it is spoken, where it seems to me that it includes that you were proposing, which has all the legitimacy that you consider if it is left in the other article, if you think that it should go in this, or if you keep the two of you, as you believe; but to alert, that is to make you realize or to observe that it is somehow included."

He reviewed the tabloid and suddenly says: "with what the president told me I agree and withdraw my approach." I said, " No, don't take it back," but I also did it out of conviction, because that's the way we're building that debate. "Raise it, because already having a doubt or making the alert about a thing will also lead us to think if things have to be more present in more than one article, if we have to ponder it here or there."

Then the next day– I always check Cubadebate in the morning above all and I check other media, but I check Cubadebate, above all the comments–there was a worker from that work center who had written: "What a great exercise of democracy my country lives, when a worker raises something, a president gives him an answer, the worker will withdraw the proposal and the president says no." Look, I'm not doing it as a personal element,

because I'm not the one who acts like this, this is how all our people act.; but it creates an atmosphere of discussion honest, frank, to respect and I think that also leads us to this consensus that sometimes someone who does not know the reality of Cuba can't explain why the Revolution, in the midst of so many difficulties, maintains the support of the majority and maintains that political consensus, which remains a challenge in the future.

**Patricia Villegas:** President, I have spent much of our dialogue talking precisely about the internal reality and the internal debates, because both inside and outside Cuba there is tremendous expectation, intrigue, concern about the destiny of the revolution; but, of course, the destiny of the revolution has everything to do with its international relations.

There is also great expectation with your participation in the General Assembly of the United Nations this month, that you will step on American territory. The structural relations between Cuba and the United States had changed, had been transforming with the Obama administration; the arrival of Trump modifies the situation, the relationship. How much do you assess it? What is the current state of these relationships?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** Fidel himself said that in history there were the answers to our challenge, to our challenge, to our reality.

Look, I think that since the beginning of the Cuban Revolution opened up a new possibility of dialogue with the government of the United States, and we have always set very well or established Fidel and the people assumed, that our problem is not with the American people. We respect, admire and love the American people, just as we love the Latin American peoples. Our conflict, our differences are not with the American people, they are precisely with the American governments because of the way they have acted towards the Revolution.

In the year 1959, the first year of the Revolution, when Fidel made his first visit after the revolutionary triumph to the United States, it goes with a willingness to dialogue with the government of the United States; that the government of the United States immediately after the triumph of the Revolution denied that dialogue and denied the most dire, he denied even by passing an invasion of Cuba was a failure and was defined by the history as the first major defeat of imperialism in Latin America.

What happens is that the dialogue is built between two or more, therefore, the dialogue also has its rules. You can't aspire to a dialogue between unequal; you can't aspire to a dialog where a party has hubris, hegemony, pressure; can't aspire to a dialog where a part conditional on the other, you have to give up your sovereignty, you have to give up your independence; unable to establish a dialog when a part requires you to submit to his plans.

**Patricia Villegas:** And those are Trump's demands?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** And these are the demands that during all these years have been present in the practice of American politics.

When was a different space opened? Well, in the last stage of President Obama's administration, and through a long process of talks and dialogues, I would say a respectful dialogue, the space was opened for the re-establishment of relations. A process that we always considered would be long, because the way in which it was acted created a lot of mistrust.

In addition, we went to a process of beginning to reestablish relations still with blockade; the blockade exists even though they were reestablished.

**Patricia Villegas:** But Cuba had expectations of greater U.S. investments for the island.

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** I'll tell you. At that moment we re-established relations and began to embark on a process, which we knew would be the longest stage of this re-establishment of relations, of normalization, and normalizations, therefore, had to lead, first of all, to the elimination of the blockade.

In that first stage of re-establishing relations, we moved forward and managed to exchange, Converse and maintain systematic contacts on a number of issues with the government of the United States. Embassies were opened in both countries and we began to move in something that Raúl defined very masterfully, in my view, in which we could have a civilized relationship, regardless of ideological differences. Ideological differences that we know will not be bridged, we have ideological positions totally contrary to those defended by the United States government; but we were able to talk, we were able to collaborate on issues.

On the other hand, there is an important business sector in the United States that wants relations with Cuba and that wants to have investments in Cuba. There is an important agricultural sector in the United States that wants such relations with Cuba. There is an important academic and scientific sector that wants relations with Cuba and, in fact, there are certain exchanges.

**Patricia Villegas:** But how much do these sectors weigh to be able to unbalance the Trump administration's position vis-à-vis Cuba?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** It is the Congress of the United States that has the power to disapprove of the embargo against Cuba, not even the President.

Of course, Obama had a much more open and reconciling position on that issue than the current president of the United States.

What has the current president of the United States done when we were moving forward in that relationship? Well, last November he dictated measures that are totally unacceptable in the relationship with Cuba. These measures, in our view, have been dictated to look good, to assume certain commitments with an anti-Cuban mafia that lives, above all, in Miami and that we all know what has been its historical position around our revolution. But the measures Trump put forward in November go against what the majority of the American people think.

In the latest polls in the United States about its position towards Cuba and its relationship to the embargo, the majority of people are against the embargo. It goes against the possibilities of United States citizens, limits United States citizens, limits them on visits to Cuba. United States citizens are alerted, when they go to visit Cuba, that they should not come to this country, they are told stories about our country that disadvantage that trip. It limits United States businessmen and United States persons to investing in or having commercial or financial relations with a list of Cuban companies that they have made known; it limits United States citizens to visit the country; it limits Cuban families to reunite.

**Patricia Villegas:** And the prospect is that doesn't change, President? Let's say, in the era of Trump, can't a rapprochement or normalization be experienced again?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** Well, it limits Cubans also to being able to go to the United States. The presence of Cuban personnel in our embassy was limited, the presence of United States personnel in the embassy was limited.

**Patricia Villegas:** They're accused of sonic attacks. Did you conduct sonic attacks on Americans?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** Let's get to it. They have included visa procedures that are almost through third countries that complicate and entangle everything. Have become the threat, to taxation and, in the midst of that, they've created a whole fallacy, and it's a whole story with alleged incidents acoustic that they have been called, even, pejoratively as acoustic attacks, a term with which we disagree, because we have not attacked anyone, nor here will violate the rights of any diplomat. I believe that if the rights of foreign citizens, particularly diplomats, are respected and protected in one place, it is in Cuba.

They have been escalating, they started with a story and Cuban and American scientists disrupted history.

**Patricia Villegas:** Did your government ask the Russians for help in attacking American diplomats?



**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** That's impossible. We have a lot of ethics to ask someone to attack someone else. We do not start from an expression of attack. We, above all, defend ourselves against attacks. We've been attacked a lot.

We have been victims of terrorist attacks. We have been victims of the blockade, which is an attack. We have been victims of defamatory campaigns against Cuba. Our top leaders were tried to annihilate with terrorist attacks. Cuba does not attack, Cuba defends, Cuba shares, Cuba is in solidarity, Cuba has a vocation to contribute to making a better world possible. It must certainly be acknowledged: relations today are in decline.

We still maintain channels of dialogue, and what is our position? and I think this is very interesting. At no time do we deny the possibilities of dialogue. We want a dialogue, but it must be a dialogue between equals, it must be a dialogue in which we are respected, and it must be a dialogue in which our sovereignty, our independence and our relations with the friendly countries of the world are not conditioned, because we do not accept impositions and we are not prepared to make any concessions of principles, much less in relations with the United States.

**Patricia Villegas:** His perspective, then, is that there will be no direct communication with Donald Trump.

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** If this aberrant attitude of the United States government towards Cuba is maintained, there will be no dialogue. Because, moreover, dialogue must be seen from both sides. We should ask them if they want to have that dialogue with us. We should ask the president of the United States if he wants to dialogue with Cuba, and if he wants to dialogue with Cuba it cannot be from an arrogant position.

**Patricia Villegas:** Mr President, I am going to take a few more minutes in this dialogue, because there are structural issues that I think deserve it.

Cuba's relationship with Venezuela: Cuba was one of the countries that spoke the fastest after the assassination attempt against President Maduro, what is your vision of what is coming for Venezuela, after this aggression in the figure of the president himself?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** Let's see, you know it well, we love Venezuela, and I think that every time you make an analysis of the Venezuelan situation and the perspectives of its situation, the first feeling that emerges for us, in addition to that love for Venezuela, for its people, for its history, for its leaders, is also the recognition and admiration for what Venezuela has done.

Venezuela, first, with Chávez changed the dependent tradition of a country that is called to play a very important role in Latin America, because of its

condition as a country with tremendous natural wealth and resources, and because of its history, and Chávez then opened the horizons of a new Venezuela.

Chavez, with his friendship with Fidel, with his relationship with Fidel, which, in addition, to the Cubans was also a relationship only, and not by choice for Fidel, and the people consider it so, Chávez was the best friend, and they were able to transcend not only for a project of Venezuela or for a Cuban project, but for a project of Latin American integration, which is expressed in several areas: in the field CELAC, in the field of Unasur, in the area of ALBA.

**Patricia Villegas:** Are those mechanisms mortally wounded, President?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** Patricia, you ask me faster than I can answer. But, no, that's active, it's a joke, you're very professional in your work.

**Patricia Villegas:** Thank you very much, President.

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** So, let's compare Venezuela before Chávez and Venezuela with Chávez. I think that the Bolivarian people, the Venezuelan people have received a number of benefits, of conquests, which, in addition, is a partaker of these gains, and these gains, then, moved, shared with the rest of the Latin American countries in these integration mechanisms, which also take on challenges like that, I wondered.

The United States always tried, by all means, to overthrow the Chávez government, using even the most perverse practices.

Remember that Chávez had attempted coup d'états and assassination attempts against him, Chávez survived that coup d'état and Chávez remained a very important leader for Venezuela, for Latin America and for the world.

Chávez was a leader legitimately elected as president in several election processes, recognized by the international community as very honest and very clean processes.

Chávez dies and Maduro, a workers' president, comes. What did imperialism think? That the workers' president was not going to withstand the pressures, that the workers' president was not going to be able to maintain the continuity of Chávez's legacy and they knocked on the door. I believe that Maduro is also a consistent leader, with a tremendous commitment to Chávez's legacy. Now one analyzes it in the light of these days and one realizes that Chávez was not wrong when he proposed Maduro. And Mature, the union civic military, the government of Venezuela, the Bolivarian Revolution, the village, which has been assaulted, I would say, in the highest expression of unconventional warfare, using media

campaigns properly, defamatory, alien, sowing distrust, going to pay the violence and seek violence within the Venezuelan society to get her off balance, going also to crash, even if it is not clear, there is no blockade on Venezuela, there are economic blockade of Venezuela, there is blockage of the financial Venezuela.

There is a Venezuelan oligarchy and right that do not want to continue sharing with the people the benefits of these conquests. What has Maduro done, what has the government done and what has the military Civic Union done? They have withstood all the onslaught.

**Patricia Villegas:** He's gonna hold on, he's gonna hold on.

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** They are going to resist and they are going to overcome, and I believe that they are resisting and, besides, they are overcoming, and they have constantly been able to find perspectives to jump the obstacles. And I believe that this has, first, upset the Venezuelan right, which today has no alternative; it has upset the Venezuelan oligarchy and it has also upset the government of the United States in assuming its position towards Venezuela. And what manifests it? The attempt to assassinate Maduro. If one analyzes this fact, one says: two things are present here: first, going in search of murder is the expression of impotence in the face of the triumph of the Bolivarian Revolution, and, on the other hand, silence about crime shows that there is complicity.

**Patricia Villegas:** That you're coming to a country after an assassination attempt.

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** I think they are going to try to keep pushing, they are going to intensify the pressures, they are going to look for a rupture in Latin America so that others join those pressures; they are going to condition Latin American countries, and we know that there have been trips of people who occupy important positions in the Trump administration's government through Latin America, pressing the Latin American and Caribbean peoples and seeking a position contrary to Venezuela. what happens is that the Latin American peoples are worthy, and many worthy governments, in their majority, recognize everything that Venezuela has done and recognize the role of Venezuela.

Then also– and it has to do with another of the questions you asked me– they have tried to disunite, to fracture the unity in the mechanisms of integration.

**Patricia Villegas:** We leave Ecuador from ALBA, we leave Colombia from Unasur. That is why I asked you, President, in the framework, because obviously Venezuela has been a reference in these integration mechanisms, if they are mortally wounded.

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** All this that is happening, Patricia, in my view, is the manifestation of a platform of capitalist, colonial, neocolonial, neoliberal restoration that the government of the United States is trying to impose for all of Latin America, because it did not resign itself to the conquests of the Latin American peoples in a decade where a group of social and revolutionary processes emerged.

**Patricia Villegas:** That they didn't shield themselves enough, President?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** I think they're weakened. Revolutionary processes also have complexities, especially when it comes to changing the economic basis of capitalism in current circumstances. The Americans do not want Cuba to be repeated anywhere in Latin America. Remember that in the early years the Cuban oligarchy went to the United States and makes its dirty war from the United States. In Venezuela the oligarchy and the counterrevolution are in the country itself, encouraged and supported from all points of view by the US administration.

Now, what's up? What did ALBA-TCP mean? I would say that no integrationist process, of any kind, at the regional level in such a short time had more success than ALBA. Let us remember that, with ALBA, immediately, in a few years, four countries managed to eliminate illiteracy with a method that we Cubans modestly contributed, which is the Yo sí puedo method. And I would say: what was achieved with ALBA in four countries is still the chimera of many peoples and countries in the world.

I always think: Cuba, when the Revolution triumphs, in the first years declares itself a territory free of illiteracy. It took more than 50 years for other Latin American countries to free themselves from the aftermath of illiteracy. And how did it happen? With integration, with collaboration, with cooperation, but a solidarity collaboration. That solidarity that we want to change the way in which the world today is globalized, we do not want hegemonic globalization, we want solidarity globalization, that solidarity globalization allowed that.

**Patricia Villegas:** But if that's so good, president, why is Ecuador leaving ALBA and why is Colombia leaving Unasur?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** That expression of solidarity that we want for globalization gave rise within ALBA-TCP to millions of people, free of charge, to achieve the vision. And I would say: what an injustice, to condemn a person for cataract that he can not see in his entire life when that today is an operation that is done in minutes! Thus, progress was made in health, education and social programmes.

Petrocaribe, which is an energy platform to provide sustainability and energy security to the peoples of the Caribbean, with a highly altruistic

position on the part of Venezuela to share one of the resources that causes wars in the world, which nobody shares and that by appropriating one of the resources of others War is formed, Venezuela shares them with the Caribbean community. So ALBA-TCP has many values since its foundation to be broken, and I think there are many who are committed to keeping ALBA-TCP.

**Patricia Villegas:** Even with the departure from Ecuador?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** Even with the departure from Ecuador.

**Patricia Villegas:** Same with Unasur, President?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** Same with Unasur. I believe that the ruptures that have been provoked are part of this strategy of establishing neocolonialism. Those who do not live up to this time will submit to the Empire and will receive the consequences of submitting to the Empire. Those of us who defend Latin American and Caribbean integration, Latin American and Caribbean unity, conscious that we can be the region where we live with the greatest peace and prosperity in the world, history will prove us right. We will have to see the passage of history, and I believe that the benefits of this type of collaboration, this type of solidarity, which is not based on selfishness, not on banalities, but on very humanistic vocations, have already been demonstrated.

CELAC provided that it is possible to the unity within diversity, and CELAC for that position of unity within diversity, was able to build a Proclamation of Peace for all of Latin America and the Caribbean, which is now threatened when there are countries that want to establish us military bases on its soil, when there are some who try to elicit from the border complex situations for the Bolivarian Revolution. But I believe that we will overcome all that in history.

There was a very important reflection on these issues of the Latin American left in an edition of the Sao Paulo Forum that met in Cuba last July. I believe that the Latin American Left is well aware of the challenges and challenges that we have in the present and for the future, and we have to integrate more, we have to unite. Only by disuniting us would these social and political constructions be destroyed.

**Patricia Villegas:** You have spoken to me about peace and, of course, I cannot help but ask you about the role of Cuba in the dialogue process in Colombia. Dialogues with the ELN are still ongoing at the time you and I are here talking on Telesur platforms, but there are serious concerns about compliance with the agreements by the Colombian state and even some former commanders of the FARC guerrillas, with what was agreed in Havana and then agreed in Bogotá. What is your perspective on Colombia's

peace and your government's position whether or not to follow the ELN dialogues?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** Peace is a necessary process for Colombia, and our modest contribution to that process is by conviction, by principle; for us, defending peace anywhere in the world is a principle, we aspire to a universal peace that can facilitate a different international economic order.

We always lend ourselves as guarantors for peace, we offer our territory, our possibilities for the development of the dialogues; but we do not interfere in the dialogues, also because of an ethical problem and a problem of principles. What we make easier is for the parties to be able to talk, to be able to solve their problems.

The problems of Colombians have to be solved by Colombians without any interference, just as the problems of Venezuela have to be solved by the Venezuelan people, and that is why we have to support the Venezuelan cause and that is why we have to support the struggle for peace in Colombia.

**Patricia Villegas:** Two last questions, although I had many left in my paper with scribbles that you said in a part of the dialogue.

The meaning you give to the triumph of López Obrador in Mexico, for this perhaps new moment of integration, of revision of mechanisms throughout the region. What value do you give to the triumph of López Obrador?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** Mexico is a very important country in the region. Mexico is an endearing country for Cuba, there are many historical and conjunctural relations. It was not for pleasure that the Centennial generation found a place in Mexico, when they left the prison, to prepare for the Revolutionary feat, and from Mexico came the Granma.

Mexico with Cuba always had a position: when everyone broke up, Mexico maintained relations with Cuba.

**Patricia Villegas:** But then there was an episode of "Eat and go."

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** Okay, but government. The Cuban people and the Mexican people have always been very united, they love each other very much, and those things cannot be broken by anyone.

López Obrador is a hope for Mexico and it is a hope for Latin America and the Caribbean. A leftist government like Obrador's, with a personality like Obrador at the head of that government, balances the problems in terms of correlation of forces that have been suffered in recent years in Latin America.

López Obrador has already stated his position regarding the Lima Group. López Obrador, in addition to having a tremendous commitment to the renewal of Mexico, to the development of his country, to continue working so that Mexicans have fewer inequalities, also wants a lot to do as a whole for Latin America and the Caribbean.

**Patricia Villegas:** Would Cuba be willing to help?

**Miguel Díaz-Canel:** Of course, and he has called and Cuba will participate, support and we have received with great satisfaction the victory of López Obrador, in Mexico.

**Patricia Villegas:** When we started this dialogue I asked you about these four months of government, what they have meant. You spoke to me about the management, the vision you have, and from there we enter, let's say, into the intense debates that are taking place in Cuban society. But this last question is the man, the grandfather, the father, the husband. How great a father has he been these four months, how great a grandfather has he been these four months, how much music has he been able to listen to these four months? And another question, in that, which is the last one, how many times have you spoken with Raúl in these four months of government?

**Miguel Díaz-Canel:** Well, let's start with the last one. I stated in an intervention I made at the closing session of the National Assembly, which met in July, and I believe that there is no one more privileged than me, as president, who has the support of the Army General, our First Secretary of the party, with all that history he has as leader of the Cuban Revolution.

We talk to Raúl almost every day. Raúl is aware of the intensity of his work, of everything that is done, and he asks for information about the things we are proposing. He participates in meetings and debates, advises in a very sincere way and without the slightest hint of a vanity or of imposing something or limiting ourselves in something, and I in that relationship –it is a very personal feeling–, sometimes... sometimes not, I always feel that he is like a father who is guiding me, and who, at the same time, is letting me walk –this is not reflected only as a personal element– he is letting us walk, he is letting us do, without ceasing to fulfill his functions and his hierarchy as party secretary. I think that gives the people a lot of confidence.

Since the people were very confident that when Fidel fell ill and placed the responsibility on Raúl, Fidel was present –as Raúl said– and Raúl said that he would always be consulting Fidel on the fundamental problems of the nation, the people are very aware that Raúl is present, is active and is always aware of everything we are doing. Therefore, I believe that in everything that is done there is a community of commitments of the Party,

the government, the nation with the people, and I feel quite sure, then, and the companions of the Council of Ministers, the government we felt very safe by having this guide, the driving, and the manner in which he educates and makes things.

Raúl, when he talked to me, first when he proposed me to be First Vice President, I, of course, had never aspired or thought that I was the person who should occupy that position, he explained it to me in such a paternal way and, at the same time, so demanding, giving confidence and, also, with the conviction that it was necessary to prepare continuity, because he was fully aware that he, when it was his turn, was going to give way to another generation. That is, that has been in his conviction, he has not made any concessions in that.

**Patricia Villegas:** Put on those shoes...

Miguel M. Diaz Canel.- The people have asked him to continue, to continue, and he said that we had to start from the example, because he is not thinking only about the current moment, he is also thinking about the continuity of the Revolution, about the future of the Revolution, when generations that none, neither mine, nor the future will have the historical merit that Fidel, Raúl and the generation that they led, could achieve, are leading the country. Therefore, it is an experience that also has a revolutionary beauty, and that I believe is an experience that gives a lot of example and, at the same time, subjects you to a lot of commitment. One is walking, taking steps along the paths they opened. I mean, it's like you're taking modest steps behind two giants, two moral giants, two ethical giants, two revolutionary giants; but, then, I look around and say: the steps are not taken by me alone, we are all taking them, and that is why we are increasingly talking about a collective direction, a direction where, in addition to commitment, there is action based on the big and the small, on strategy, but also on detail, and those are convictions that permeated Fidel and Raúl in us.

When you go through the provinces, you appreciate that in the midst of so much difficulty there is a courageous people, an educated people, a cultured people, a very committed people, a totally enterprising people, who at times, you are amazed at the solutions they find to face adversity, and a people that transmits a lot of affection and a lot of trust.

I have to tell you that, personally, I make a tremendous effort for things that are public; I am usually reserved, shall we say, I am pitiful. When I'm on the tours and sometimes I see that there are a crowd of people on the street, that squeezes me; but I always say: I'm going to talk to people, and I go out to the crowd, I start talking, I ask, I tell them the things we are doing, what we have seen, because people always want to know if you



really know the problems; some who pose problems, dissatisfactions, we explain, we tell them what we are projecting; but people come with a feeling, I would say of support, not the person who is at that moment sharing with them, but they also see it as an expression of support for continuity. And the first thing there is, these are the phrases: "do not fail Fidel and Raúl, Long Live Fidel! Long Live Raul!». Then, it supports you a lot, but at the same time you committed much, and one says: What a legacy you have to defend, what a tremendous responsibility, and then, you can't crush by that affection and by that commitment, and one, on the contrary, you have to take courage and say: "Let's march forward, and we're going to march forward, because we are not alone, we are with this people and we have to work in collective, and we have to give participation to the people as it has made the Revolution, always!».

On one occasion, in a Council of Ministers recently, I was sharing with my colleagues in government and he said to them, "To a people so brave, so heroic and so committed, the reason of our lives, the only reason we can have our lives is the total surrender acting, creating, working without rest, and with fidelity to that village, that is also the fidelity to the Revolution, is the loyalty to Fidel and Raúl, and that one has for conviction."

So this is also expressed on the family level. One cannot occupy responsibilities as a person separated from his life, one is a social being, one lives within a group of friends, within a group with people who occupy responsibilities among a team and there is also the family. I receive from my family understanding, support; the boys are very critical and with tremendous carelessness they tell me things that they believe must be improved, that start from their own experiences; therefore, in the house there is also a dialogue, which is the same dialogue that there is at the level of society.

**Patricia Villegas:** A storm of questions like this interview.

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** And sometimes someone says to me: "but in the house we are not going to talk about these things, " but we always talk and I believe that this has to be the case, genuine, because I do not believe that there is a Cuban home that can be separated from talking and debating about realities.

My wife is a woman so capable, it helps me a lot, is an academic, has been specialized in the topics of literature and culture, especially Cuban; encourages me a lot; it is very objective way to analyze a problem, to criticize a problem, makes me counterpart as well and we share a lot of common interests, not to say that everything, and, therefore, with it, I share ideas, discussions. I ask her for her opinion on ideas that I have, on

things that I want to project; I ask her for criteria on how I wrote a speech; or how to come up with an idea, and I always get great support in that.

So, the other things we share also in family, the music that helps so much to spirituality, we also share poetry. Two of the three boys are artists. So at home it is very common, when there is a time, on Sundays, especially at lunch I always say: "when I arrive, but we all have lunch", and at least we try to preserve Sunday, at any time, even if it is very late, that we all have lunch with the family, and there the boys download, sing or we all sing a little.

**Patricia Villegas:** Do you sing too?

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** I'm very out of tune and they start making fun of me right away when they hear me sing, but they already consider it impossible and they say: "Well, come on, let him sing whatever he wants".

We also share with their partners, with friends, and that also gives me a lot of strength.

**Patricia Villegas:** And the grandson smiles at her.

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** The grandson smiles at me, and now something is confirmed that my mother told me: "You raise your children with whom you are very demanding and spoil your grandchildren", and I am already spoiling my grandchildren, I realize that I am a grandfather who spoils.

**Patricia Villegas:** We spoke today with the grandfather, President of Cuba. Many thanks to you for this time.

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** Thank you very much, Patricia. You know what Telesur means to us. I really am not an interview person, I like much more to do than talk and so far I had not given any interviews. This will find me a little dissatisfaction with my friends in the Cuban press, but also in the coming moments we will talk with the Cuban press. I have already received requests from the Cubadebate team and the newspaper Granma; but I think no one is going to be jealous that it was with Telesur, because Telesur is also from Cuba.

**Patricia Villegas:** That's right, President.

**Miguel Diaz-Canel:** Telesur is Latin America and Telesur is also the one that is playing an important role as a medium so that the emancipatory contents of Latin America are in the world and are also a counterpart of all that media-colonizing expression that they try to impose on us.

Thanks to you, and thanks to your collective. We have felt very well and I think you have felt at home.

**Patricia Villegas:** We wait for the reactions of our users through social networks on Telesur platforms in English and Spanish.

We have spoken from the Palace of the Revolution itself, in the city of Havana, with the president of Cuba. Thank you for your company.

# **We Have Struggled For 150 Years And We Will Continue To Struggle, Ever Onward To Victory**

## **Speech on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cuban independence struggle (October 10, 2018)**

Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee;

Compatriots:

We are once again in La Demajagua, the place where we say: We are Cuba – with an abundance of patriotic sentiments.

We are Cuba: you, us, the history and this landscape are formidable; it looks like a canvas of the nation, with the sea and the mountain in the background, the mill's old machinery embraced by a powerful ficus tree.

According to legend, which is the poetic version of history, no artist raised this monument. (Gesture). It was the work of nature.

After the uprising, in an act of ludicrous impotence, Spanish troops burnt the site, time went by, and a ficus tree grew over the old sugar mill's drive wheel, to eternalize the event.

It is impossible to arrive here and not be moved by such a mystery. One more, among the many which have accompanied us, since we began the struggle for a free Cuba.

Today we come requesting permission from history to enter one of its sacred sites, to pay tribute to those who gave us a nation, and those who later rescued her, taking for themselves nothing more than sacrifice.

This site is beautiful, and at the same time, sublime, because here Carlos Manuel de Céspedes raised the soul of a newborn people against the colonial power that had tyrannized them for more than three centuries, and declared all free citizens, without distinction based on race or sex, interring forever the rotten foundations of a patriarchal, slave-holding society.

It is only right to honor the ground on which they rode together, under a torrential rainstorm - the former master and those who until that day had been his slaves.

Born here 150 years ago was the Cuban Revolution, and here, a century later, Fidel noted its unique character, from October 10, 1868, through our times.

One is moved, as well, to think that this bell - rung that glorious day to decree equal rights for all Cubans for the first time - would, in 1947, be taken to awaken the nation's conscience, in the hands a young student, the same one who would return in 1968, having become the revolutionary leader Fidel Castro Ruz, to give us an unparalleled history lesson.

The centenary of October 10 is another event worthy of celebration. On this day, the name of Carlos Manuel de Céspedes took on greater meaning, as Father of the Homeland.

Until then, his famous statement that all Cubans were his children, when he refused to lay down his arms in exchange for the freedom of his son Oscar, was the explanation given in Cuban primary schools as to why we call him Father.

We lacked the powerful arguments regarding the meaning for Cuba of his first liberatory acts, an issue that had been debated a great deal among academics, but not in speeches on the date or in school books.

The reflections that day of someone passionate about history, like Fidel, were more than a speech, but rather a deeply felt invitation to revisit - with heart and mind definitively free of imported and reductionist lessons - the dramatic course of the process begun 100 years earlier, in this valley, so close to where he would return to the country, in 1956, with the expedition destined to recover the Revolution frustrated by foreign intervention, and within view of the mountains where the Centenary Generation would fight again for independence, with the same devotion shown by the nation's founders.

I have re-read many times the words of Fidel during that solemn commemoration, and I have just extracted phrases that indicate its historical importance. All are transcendental and maintain a striking relevance, despite the fact that they were spoken when most of those gathered here today had yet to be born, and we were elementary school students.

Those with more age surely recall that day, also a rainy one, according to what Fidel himself said. And I have no doubt that it was where and when he said, "... in Cuba there has been a single revolution: that which Carlos Manuel de Céspedes began on October 10, 1868. And which our people carry forward at this moment."

Remembering, however, is not enough. We must invite our children and grandchildren, today's students, to extract the meaning of that statement, with which began the first public, political analysis of the most important chapter of the nation's history.

Let us begin with his evaluation of the decisions made by Céspedes. Fidel says, "The story of many revolutionary movements is that they ended - the vast majority of them - in prison or in the grave.

"Undoubtedly, Céspedes had a very clear idea that the uprising could not result in much, nor could he risk taking the long route of perfecting an organization, an army equipped with large quantities of weapons, to begin the struggle...

"The history of our people over these 100 years confirms this axiomatic truth; if to fight, we wait to first assemble the ideal conditions, have all the

necessary weapons, assure supplies, then the struggle would never begin..."

Facing the enormous challenges of Cuba today, condemned by the U.S. blockade to a shortage of material resources that makes prosperity appear impossible, it is imperative to resume Fidel's 1968 analysis.

Facing the reality of that first day as Cubans, an idea held by only a few dozen men, almost all unarmed and soaked by the rain, the extraordinary power of a revolutionary ideal was revealed. Instead of waiting for better times, the insurgents at La Demajagua euphorically threw themselves into making a revolution that would cost them, at that first moment, all the wealth they possessed, if not their very lives.

Those who measure their luck, or that of their country, with possessions would say: "They lost everything." Only those who believe in the homeland would understand the truth: "They gave us everything. Even what we did not have: freedom."

So then, we know that, yes, it is possible to triumph, starting with nothing, at times with no weapons other than morality and patriotism. And that from a struggle under the worst circumstances, emerges the vast reservoir of courage and perseverance which has made the Cuban people what we are: a sovereign, independent nation, proud of our history, something that is nothing more than an unreachable dream for many nations in our region and the world.

Céspedes' decision to free the slaves, that would not find consensus among the insurgents a year later at the Guáimaro Assembly, is another act which Fidel described in his comments as radically revolutionary. With this, Céspedes was again ahead of his contemporaries, and it was perhaps then, not later, when he earned the title of Father of all Cubans.

Because the new nation could not overlook one of its great strengths: the children of the African men and women who emigrated by the force of the whip and colonial power, whose descendents reached the highest ranks in the wars of independence and in the dignifying act of being a Cuban national, as Antonio Maceo would prove throughout his exemplary life, he who in Baraguá, as Fidel said, "... saves the flag, saves the cause, and places the revolutionary spirit of the newborn people at its highest level..."

We again say, "We are Cuba," when we recall the bravest of the warriors, the mestizo, son of a lion and lioness, that was not satisfied with the glory of being the Mambi officer most feared by his adversaries, and filled the book of his life with pages of such dignity, that reviewing it today, makes more just and more necessary the persistent demand, of Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, to protect and encourage the humanist legacy of Céspedes, who put the Black man alongside the white, and not behind. Not at his service, but as an equal.

He called them citizens right away, without distinction. The inheritor of this first law, which even before being written had dignified human beings (fighting) in the scrub, our National Assembly, the nation's supreme power, bears today, and must forever, the colors that made Cuba invincible. Blacks, mixed race, mestizos are needed by the country of our future, just as they brought glory to the country in our honorable past.

Compatriots:

On today's date, almost 20 years after the uprising at La Demajagua, in a commemoration with émigrés in New York, José Martí, excited by the emotion of an auditorium of Cuban patriots, said, "This date, this religious enthusiasm, the presence (...) of those who, on a day like this, abandoned welfare to obey honor (...) those who fell to the ground giving birth, as heroes always fall, demands from the lips of man such words that, when you cannot speak with sunbeams, with the headiness of victory, with the holy joy of the armies of freedom, the only language worthy is silence. I do not know that there are words worthy of this moment."

When reading this, listening to Martí, one feels the need to be silent. If the owner of words believes none exist that merit being spoken, who can dare to speak. But the Apostle himself, with this speech, left us a guide to not remaining silent, asking ourselves, "Why are we here? What motivates us, more than our gratitude, to gather to commemorate our fathers?"

And our generation responds: If in 1968, a historical analysis based on Marxist concepts was needed, to replace all the laurels that the interventionists had snatched, today this same history is demanding of us review and learning, indispensable to our moving to a higher stage of the same Revolution that has not ceased 150 years after it began.

The two '68s that precede us, bear lessons, and between one and the other, the country we are today has been shaping itself.

Fidel said in 1968 that if we do not understand the historical process of the Revolution, "We won't know anything about politics." And he called on us to learn and study history. Why? What for, the naive may ask, or those who believe that subjective factors play no role in the country's destiny. Well then, for the same reasons that our adversaries ask us to turn the page and forget history.

Because herein lie the keys to all our defeats and failures, which we have had and very painful ones, throughout the 150 years of struggle, but also the keys to our resistance and the victories.

Cuban education, at all grades and levels, has the inescapable duty to study this chapter of our history, through Fidel's speech of 1968, along with two others, inseparable from the first: that of March 13, 1865, on the University of Havana Grand Stairway, and that of May 11, 1973, in Jimaguayú. This magnificent triad, worthy of the extraordinary intellectual and orator who delivered them, allows us, as no other fountain, to drink in the value of

unity and understand the profound meaning of the short phrase we have chosen to identify ourselves on social media and other arenas imposed by current communications: We are Cuba.

When on October 10, 1868, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes read his vibrant manifesto to “compatriots and all nations,” he was establishing invariable principles, that make the Revolution unique, and I continue:

“Cuba aspires to be a great, civilized nation, to extend a friendly hand and fraternal heart to all other peoples, and if Spain itself agrees to leave us free and tranquil, we will hold her to our breast like the loving daughter of a good mother. But if Spain persists in its system of domination and extermination, it will cut all of our necks, and those of who may come to take our place, before being able to make Cuba, forever a vile herd of slaves.”

Let us change the name of Spain in these words to that of the contemporary power, which for 60 years now has hounded us, and we will find the solution, and the invariable position in our chosen destiny. The Revolution is the same one.

And also identical are the challenges: an imperial attack from abroad; an annexationist tendency of a few within - of those who do not believe that the homeland can stand on its own strength - and as our only salvation: unity.

Martí and Fidel saw it and warned us, both in their own time. Both learned from previous history that only disunion has been able to defeat the country.

At this time, as we discuss, among all, what the model society we owe ourselves will look like, thinking about Céspedes is a must, thinking about the men and women who at his side became founding leaders, and about everything that frustrated their dreams, so close to our own. The breaking of unity was always the fundamental cause of defeats and setbacks.

A century after Martí’s birth, the generation which would vindicate his noble aspirations of regrouping and uniting defenders of the Revolution’s continuators, emerged on the historical horizon in Cuba. I refer to our historic generation, the venerable vanguard that never shirked its responsibility or commitment to the humble.

Here today, the homeland’s youngest sons and daughters have reaffirmed the message to new generations, expressing the firm commitment that we will not give up; we will not betray; and we will never surrender.

Let us assume as our own, with the firm decision of continuity, the words of Fidel, that October 10, 1968, “... because this people, just as it struggled for 100 years for its destiny, is capable of struggling another 100 for this same destiny.”

Compatriots:



We have struggled 150 years and we will continue struggling, always onward to victory.

Long live a free Cuba! (Shouts of Viva!)

Eternal glory to Carlos Manuel de Céspedes! (Shouts of Gloria!)

Long live October 10! (Shouts of Viva!)

Long live the heroic Cuban people and their 100-year struggles! (Shouts of Viva!)

Long live Fidel and Raúl! (Shouts of Viva!)

Socialism or death!

Homeland or death!

Venceremos! (Ovation)

# **The Greater Homeland Calls Us To Unite And Continue Forging Our Second Definitive Independence**

## **Speech at the ALBA-TCP Summit in Havana (December 14, 2018)**

Esteemed Presidents, Prime Ministers, and heads of delegations, distinguished guests: Esteemed colleague David Choquehuanca: Who among us does not remember that December 14, 2004, the gala in Carlos Marx Theater, and Fidel placing the Carlos Manuel de Céspedes Order on Chavez's chest?

That day, Fidel evoked what Céspedes said: "Venezuela, which opened the path of independence to Spanish America and traveled this path gloriously until the march concluded at Ayacucho, is our illustrious teacher of freedom ..." That December 14, ALBA was born and Cuba celebrated. Who among us can forget the joys of that day when Chávez and Fidel signed the birth certificate of a new integration project between equals? Who among those who lived it is not moved by the memory of the brotherhood those men shared, who not only had great dreams, but gave them poetic names and made them come true? During one ALBA Summit, Chávez recalled the day when Fidel named the mission that, thanks to this integration alliance, has already provided surgery for different ophthalmological pathologies to more than 2,800,000 Latin Americans and Caribbeans. Nothing less than a miracle. We also heard him talk about the dawn that inspired him to name ALBA, the event we celebrate today. It is hard to believe that all this would emerge in the mind of the Bolivarian leader in December of 2001, with Venezuela faced by an employer lock-out, a prelude to the coup that would take place the following year. After a long night thinking about alternatives to counter the imperialist ALCA project (Free Trade Agreement of the Americas-FTAA), the light of dawn appeared and with it the idea. A meeting of the Association of Caribbean States was held on Margarita Island and Chávez announced his project. Fidel, who was there, not only applauded with enthusiasm, but on his return to Havana, wrote requesting details. Chávez admitted to him that it was only an idea. Three intense years later – facing coups, a blockade, and aggression of all kinds, the two sign a declaration providing for the founding of ALBA.

Its first name was the Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of Our America, since it was an integration project countering the Free Trade Agreement. Eleven months later, at the Summit of the Americas, in Mar del Plata, Argentina, the proposal for an imperialist backed alliance, the FTAA, was buried by the peoples of the region, in an act of rebellion and solidarity, led by Chávez, who was already making continental history. After its first five years, in 2009, the meaning of ALBA's first letter was changed. It was still ALBA but no longer an alternative, but rather an alliance, and with the contribution of Bolivia it became the ALBA-TCP.

Thus, today we celebrate 14 years since the birth of ALBA and nine years of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America-Peoples Trade Agreement, ALBA-TCP.

Over time, joining the two founding states, one of which I am honored to represent, were Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Dominica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Grenada. May my first words today be a tribute to this commitment and its realization. To the dream, to the dreamers, and to all those who made it possible that, in less than 15 years, we have settled debts accumulated over centuries. We are proud and pleased to recall the works of our integration: the more than 11,000 doctors from ALBA countries trained in the Latin American Medical Schools of Cuba and Venezuela; the 2,223,035 Latin Americans and Caribbeans who received eye surgery; the more than 30 million ophthalmological consultations; the one and a half million disabled persons identified and assisted; the 4,163,767 people who learned to read and write in the region, via the "Yes, I can" method; the three ALBA-TCP countries declared Illiteracy Free Territories: Venezuela in 2005, Bolivia in 2008, and Nicaragua in 2009. Others, like El Salvador, are moving steadily forward to achieve this. These are the accomplishments, despite the serious impact on these programs of the economic war suffered by Venezuela. Experts agree that there is no precedent for a social conquest of this magnitude by any other integration mechanism. But we have results to show not only in the social arena. There is the ALBA Bank, which offers financing to our nations for economic projects of interest. And there is investment of income, from the sale of fuel through fair payment agreements, for social development and in agriculture, fishing, industry, and naval repairs; for the creation of industrial and mining capacity; and road, water, airport, port, and tourism infrastructure. Who can ignore the solidary help of Cuban and Caribbean doctors and electrical workers, Venezuelan, Bolivian, Nicaraguan, Cuban, and Salvadoran rescue workers, scientists from our nations, when we have needed it the most? We speak, proudly, of help offered without conditions, respectful of national interests and the laws of each country. There is no room for political pressure, of any kind, between us. The Alliance is an unquestionable paradigm of solidarity, cooperation, and consensus among its members. These values constitute our main strength.

We are also conscious of our collective potential, which our needs call for, to become decisive actors in the times in which we live. It is necessary to act with audacity and realism, and adjust proposals to match real potential. Fundamentally, we need to articulate plans, projects, and focus the limited resources that we have. Above all, we must take into consideration the adverse international and regional economic environment and the impact of coercive, unfair unilateral measures against several of our countries. Even in these difficult circumstances, it is possible to move forward.

The current situation demands, even more, unity and political consensus

among our countries and decisive efforts to confront the imperialist strategy of division. The unwavering conviction that Our America is one, from the Río Bravo to Patagonia, is imperative, and that we have a fundamental duty to prevent them from plundering our natural resources and subjugating us to their hegemony. The hostility of imperialism is today directed against our most genuine values. They are bothered by the solidarity that characterizes us; they do not tolerate social justice, and even less equity in the distribution of income. They irrationally hate the peoples' sovereign vocation and do not respect our right to the political systems we choose.

They undermine sustainable development and living harmoniously with the environment.

They disdain and attack the Latin American and Caribbean vision of unity, South-South cooperation, and the search for economic complementarity. Their onslaught has a single goal: taking control of the immense natural resources of a region that, for a long time, has been considered their back yard.

Thus they have resurrected the principles of the Monroe Doctrine, the "law" of regional subordination to the interests of U.S. capital - a policy that was conceived with this goal more than 195 years ago, and its essence has remained invariable. Given this reality, it is our duty to oppose these pretensions, in no way veiled, to unearth their spirit.

"Let us put forward the social, let us be deeply humanistic, let us put forward the pain of our people to strengthen social cohesion, that is ALBA," said Chávez in his historic address in Mar del Plata, of November 2005. This brief review here shows us how much was accomplished. It must not be forgotten that all this was achieved under fire - subversion, coups or threats of coup, the threats that never end ... the blockade that never ceases.

Precisely on December 14, 2004, Fidel reflected on the context in which ALBA was conceived: "The battle now is harder and more difficult. A hegemonic empire, in a globalized world, the only superpower that prevailed after the Cold War and the prolonged conflict between two radically different political, economic, and social concepts, constitutes a huge obstacle to what is needed today to preserve, not only the most elementary rights of human beings, but even our own survival. "Some will say: what has changed? What we changed was changed. And it was not insignificant. Let us remember only the most notable: As a consequence of the earthquake in Haiti, January 12, 2010, ALBA-TPC countries approved an action plan to contribute to the reconstruction and development of this sister country of the Caribbean in the areas of health, finance, energy, agriculture and food sovereignty, education, construction, security, transport, and logistics. Despite its shortcomings, ALBA-TPC has carried out concrete projects to unite the strengths of member countries for the benefit of our people in food, the environment, science and technology, fair trade, culture, education, energy, industry and mining, health,

telecommunications, transport, and tourism. Today I am particularly interested in highlighting the political and moral power of our Alliance: The ALBA bloc, since its emergence, has defended firm, correct positions strongly condemning the genocidal U.S. economic, commercial, and financial blockade of Cuba.

ALBA energetically supported the government of President Evo Morales in denouncing the calls made by separatist groups in Bolivia, which contributed to halting these attempts at division.

It was ALBA, the voice of our voices, that was raised in international forums to win approval of the Managua Summit Accord, in which heads of state rejected the coup in Honduras. It was ALBA countries which, in the 2008 Annual Assembly of the Organization of American States, were able to vacate the infamous 1962 expulsion of Cuba as a member of the OAS.

ALBA's support for the World Summit of Peoples on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in Cochabamba, Plurinational State of Bolivia, in April 2010 has been decisive. Our solidarity is fundamental to the people of Puerto Rico in their struggle for independence and national sovereignty. How valuable is the establishment of the Council of Social Movements, the meetings of these Movements in Tintorero, Venezuela, in 2007, and in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in 2009 and 2010, and the initiatives and positions taken on important issues on the international agenda.

Brothers and sisters: Everything we have achieved together could be just another chapter in our region's efforts to unite - which our enemies thwarted - if we do not recognize the new dangers and threats facing ALBA. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Republic of Nicaragua have been the main targets of the most recent attacks aimed at dismantling even the slightest progress in terms of sovereignty and social justice. But ALBA-TPC is, at the same time, an insurmountable bastion resisting the attempts of reactionary forces to isolate Venezuela and Nicaragua. It is imperative to defend, against all odds, the full relevance of the Alliance as a space of resistance, dialogue, and struggle, of which we feel an indissoluble part.

Hence our recognition and solidarity with President Nicolás Maduro Moros and with the democratically elected government of Venezuela, and with Sandinista Nicaragua led by Commander Daniel Ortega Saavedra. We will always stand beside Venezuela and Nicaragua, brothers in struggle and in dreams for the dignity of our peoples. We cannot be naive or silently accept the aggression orchestrated against other sister countries. It is not possible to underestimate the vast resources our historic adversaries have deployed to derail governments, impose chaos, and overthrow democratically elected authorities, or to prevent progressive and popular forces from maintaining government power. Interference in the internal affairs of states, political subversion, economic aggression, its social impact, and constant threats to use force, constitute real dangers for peace and security in the region. Observance of the principles of the Proclamation of Latin America

and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace is essential to preserve stability in the area. It is imperative to defend the ethics and honesty of public administrations and to reject the use of the courts in politics, as the people's will is ignored with alarming frequency, as has happened in Brazil, where vengeful judges, now associated with the right, insist on the practice to accuse and convict progressive leaders.

It is necessary to build a front, as broad as possible, that brings together left and progressive forces, movements, and social organizations in the region, to face these challenges. And we cannot forget for a moment the most important and vital of the tasks we share: to engage permanently in the construction, strengthening, and defense of unity. This is our most precious asset. A debt to our heroes and a commitment to our children. As Fidel said, "the age of egoism must end."

ALBA-TCP is a necessity. As a genuine Latin American and Caribbean mechanism, it has shown, more than once, that it is an effective space for joint action, unity, defense of just causes, integration, cooperation, and solidarity.

The peoples of Our America hold painful memories. It is not possible to forget the lessons of the past, the cruel, dark years of military dictatorships and the impact of neoliberalism, which they are trying to reinstate, with policies of coercion, humiliation, and isolation with disastrous consequences for our region, as always, with the United States as their main promoter.

With increasingly aggressive actions and language, today the empire insists on reestablishing colonial subordination to the government in Washington and U.S. corporations.

Under the same precepts that plagued Our America with pain and misery in the name of freedom - as Bolívar warned early on - the old practices return with new trappings. Dear colleagues, sisters and brothers: José Martí was barely 24 years old when he wrote in a single paragraph a history lesson that we should all know. Martí said: "Pizarro conquered Peru while Atahualpa warred with Huascar; Cortés beat Cuauhtémoc because Xicoténcatl helped his endeavor; Alvarado entered Guatemala as the Quichés surrounded the Zutujiles. Given that disunity has meant death, what vulgar understanding, or petty heart, must be told that our life depends on unity?"

"Compañeros:

Before initiating the remarks, I wish to thank on behalf of our government and the entire people of Cuba, the position taken by ALBA-TCP countries during the debate and approval of the resolution to end the U.S. blockade of Cuba, in the last session of the United Nations General Assembly. I acknowledge the coherence, courage, and dignity shown by our sister Caribbean nations, refusing to give in to pressures, which we strongly condemn.

Likewise, I reiterate our opposition to the insistence on including them among middle-income countries, and to the unjust measures against them as non-cooperative jurisdictions, while we support their just demand to receive compensation for the damages caused by slavery. In the name of our Revolution and our people, I would like to share with you the profound legacy of the most devoted follower of Martí among Cubans. Fidel taught us that "our peoples have no future without unity, without integration".

Bolívar and Martí, Fidel and Chávez bequeathed us invaluable teachings, among them loyalty to principles. Their lessons show us the route to follow in this decisive hour for the greater homeland, which calls on us to unite and continue forging our second, definitive independence.

I believe it is timely, during this stage of struggle and resistance, to recall what the leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, said in Cartagena de Indias in October of 1995, and I quote: "We are not mere spectators. This world is also our world. Nothing can take the place of our united action, nobody will speak for us. Only us, and only united, can we reject the unjust global political and economic order that some intend to impose on our peoples. "

Let us thus defend the noble ideas that we share in ALBA-TCP, with all our strength. Thank you very much. (Applause)

# **We Will Move Forward And We Will Continue To Be Victorious**

## **Speech at the National Assembly of People's Power (December 22, 2018)**

DEAR Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, First Secretary of the Party Central Committee;

Compañeros Machado and Lazo;

Deputies;

Compatriots:

Our first words on Educator's Day are to congratulate and recognize Cuban teachers who, more than their time, dedicate their life's purpose to us.

The year 2018 is almost at an end, and we gather again for the traditional embrace and evaluation of a crucial period in the history of the Cuban Revolution.

The year we bid farewell to today will remain in our national memory as the year in which a new generation, gradually and progressively, in a clear expression of continuity, began to assume the principal leadership tasks, with the good fortune of maintaining the guidance of the Historic Generation, in particular, of Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba.

During the months since the Assembly sessions of April, we have relied on that guide in the face of the most difficult and unexpected challenges, and found in his confidence and collective leadership the fundamental resources to arrive here today to render accounts, committed to the solution of the problems that most concern the people, which are those that absorb every minute of our days, and every element of our energies.

On taking stock of efforts and results, I must firstly speak of our deep satisfaction with the popular discussion of the new Constitution approved today.

With that debate, we have not only enriched our political culture, the sense of belonging to a nation and the future of the country. We have come closer to the concerns and demands of our people, a fundamental objective of the Revolution, which our opponents have always tried to distract us from, intent on fracturing and dividing Cuban society, aware that unity is its most valuable strength.

I would like to say that it has been a boom year for electronic government and greater efficiency in economic governance, but this is only the first step in a task of infinite demands that by 2019 should begin to bear its first fruits.



And it must also be said that we faced really hard tests, such as the floods that devastated the central provinces and the fall of an airplane that left a painful toll of 112 dead and a single survivor, who in recent days has sent a beautiful message of thanks to her compatriots, and especially to the medical team that kept her alive.

After the sad task of revisiting the worst news of this year for Cuba, I return to the most stimulating.

This session of the National Assembly concludes with a transcendental decision for the life of the nation: the approval of the new Constitution of the Republic, which in February will be submitted to a Referendum.

We arrive at this point after an extensive process of popular consultation, where citizens, resident inside or outside the country, had the opportunity to freely express their considerations on the content of the draft text, which included, among other relevant aspects, political and economic foundations, rights and duties, and the structure of the State.

Each and every one of the contributions were duly evaluated and resulted in changes to about 60% of the articles of the draft, which enriched its content.

The popular analysis showed the will to improve the Constitution, but it went much further because it provided important elements to take into account in the broad legislative exercise that we must undertake to support, with the necessary laws, compliance with constitutional precepts.

This is a good opportunity, on behalf of the National Assembly, to congratulate those who participated in the assurance and organization of the popular consultation process, including the two-person teams that led the more than 133,000 assemblies held throughout the country, the officials responsible for the collection and analysis of the proposals; the Party Central Committee's Center for Socio-political Studies and, in particular, the Commission responsible for drafting the proposed Constitution and, as it has been heartfully and rightly expressed here, its president, Army General Raúl Castro Ruz (Applause).

The Fundamental Law that we have just approved reaffirms the socialist path of the Revolution, and allows us to steer the work of the State, government, organizations and the entire people in the continuous perfection of society; it reinforces institutionality; the prevalence of the Constitution establishes greater inclusion, justice and social equality in our work, and reinforcement of the empowerment of the people in governing the nation.

This process, which continues with the holding of the Referendum on February 24 of the coming year, is a genuine and exceptional demonstration of the people's exercise of power and, therefore, of the marked participatory and democratic nature of our political system.

Contrary to what the enemies of the Revolution state, Cuba has once again shown that fundamental decisions and consensus on the issues that define the life of the nation are built with the decisive contribution of all. We could dare our detractors to carry out in their countries a process with similar characteristics to the one we are undertaking.

On a date as dear as February 24, 124 years after the resumption of the independence struggle led by National Hero José Martí, Cubans of today, faithful to the traditions of struggle, will go to the polls to approve the Constitution, as an expression of resolve, loyalty to the legacy of the Comandante en Jefe of the Cuban Revolution, compañero Fidel Castro, and we will say with our vote: Yes to the Revolution, to the sovereignty and independence of the Homeland, to unity. Yes for socialism and for the commitment to heroes and martyrs in more than 150 years of struggles for freedom.

Dear compañeras and compañeros:

The debate in the ten standing committees of this Assembly has been intense and productive. In addition to the constitutional text, we have discussed two priority issues in plenary: fulfilment of the plan and budget for this year, and your proposals for 2019.

With discrete 1.2% Gross Domestic Product growth – which while limited, is no less encouraging, in the midst of so many adverse factors – economic performance closes the year on a positive note.

So that it is not underestimated, I would like to review some decisions favored by this discreet, but real growth:

In November of this year, the increase in the minimum pension for retirees was put into effect, rising from 200 to 242 pesos for almost 300,000 people.

In addition, all the monetary benefits received through social welfare were increased by 70 pesos, benefiting 99,000 households.

These increases, which have an annual cost to the State Budget of 224 million pesos, are aimed at modestly improving the income of individuals and households with lower purchasing power, and are a partial advance of the measures that will be adopted to put in order the situation of salaries, pensions, social welfare benefits, subsidies and free services.

One of the sectors that contributes the most is communications, thanks to the growth of connectivity and Internet access in state entities, as well as in the services demanded by the population, with the increase of 700,000 mobile phone lines, for a total of 5,300,000 in service.

Public access points via Wi-Fi have also grown by more than 300, and there are already 60,000 homes connected to the Internet.

The major impacts on Gross Domestic Product were concentrated in the sugar industry and, more moderately, in the agriculture and livestock

sector. However, it is right to highlight the increase in the production of rice and beans that allows us to substitute imports.

Despite the impact of Hurricane Irma, which severely affected the marketing of Cuba as a destination in the 2017-2018 high season, and the measures adopted by the U.S. government to deter travel to our country, tourism will end this year with growth and a new record number of international visitors.

No less relevant is the fact that in the midst of so many adverse factors, social services have been guaranteed to the population in Education, Health, Culture and Sports. It is expected that the year 2018 will close with an infant mortality rate of 4, similar to the previous year, which is the lowest in history.

A program that had a significant boost was that of housing, which allowed for the completion of more than 29,000 homes through the state plan, while those built through the efforts of the population will reach about 11,000. The housing policy that was recently approved by the Council of Ministers and of which deputies were informed in this parliamentary session, will contribute to this effort.

Similar levels of economic growth are expected for the coming year: 1.5% in Gross Domestic Product, with a recovery of the sugar industry, and increases in activity in other sectors such as construction, transport and communications.

But this growth, while reflecting the country's progress in certain sectors, does not allow us to achieve the levels of development required to meet the ever-growing needs of the population. For this reason, within the National Economic and Social Development Plan through 2030, a group of objectives has been defined toward which economic performance for the period 2019-2021 should be directed. Among these, the increase in export revenues and the capacity to increase national production will be vital, through an investment process that requires more efficiency.

Non-state forms of management contributed 12% of total revenues to the State Budget in 2018, which should also grow slightly next year. Almost 600,000 self-employed workers contribute 5% of the Budget income.

Compañeras and compañeros:

The country continues to suffer from a strained external finance situation, due to non-fulfillment of planned revenues from exports, tourism and sugar production, in addition to the damage caused by a prolonged drought, followed by the destruction of Hurricane Irma, and subsequently the occurrence of heavy rains, all of which has affected the arrival of raw materials, equipment and supplies.

Only thanks to additional control measures over the main financial resources allocated in the 2018 Plan, aimed at working with greater precision in decisions regarding imports and other foreign currency

expenditures in the second half of the year, was growth achieved, with a positive trade and current account balance.

We have stated that the economic battle remains the fundamental, and also the most complex task. This is the task that today demands the most from all of us, because it is what our people anticipate most.

The context we have described demands mobilizing planning, aimed at preventing bureaucracy from immobilizing the performance of the main economic actors.

It is necessary to strengthen our leadership and economic management structures and teams, with the contributions of Economic Sciences specialists and experts, in particular, and others in general. We can not tire of hearing from those in the know, assessing their proposals and coordinating them with what we set out to achieve.

We need a more proactive, intelligent and precise attitude from leaders, promoting — not holding back or delaying — safe and specific solutions to problems, with the continuous and intense search for timely and efficient responses.

It is necessary to be more consistent with the Conceptualization of the Economic and Social Model, and more systematic and precise in the implementation of the Economic and Social Policy Guidelines of the Revolution, approved by our Party.

It is time to act without dogmas and with realism, addressing the priorities, facilitating the real strengthening of state enterprise and its productive links with foreign investment, joint ventures and the non-state sector of the economy.

We must also put in order the activity of the private sector of the economy, but without impeding or slowing down its performance, stimulating best practices until ensuring that those working within it move away from illegalities. The challenge is to integrate all the actors, forms of property and management present in our social economic environment into the battle for the economy that, I reiterate, is today the fundamental battle.

As the results of the year tell us, it is imperative to boost foreign investment, foster an environment of confidence and security for investors, export more, protect revenues, close export cycles with timely collections; comply with what was repeatedly noted by Army General Raúl Castro – not to spend more than what we have as income, and not to assume commitments that we can not honor. Also, to halt and solve the chain of defaults.

Investing efficiently and enforcing the provisions of feasibility studies after the launch of investments is as important as awarding all possible attention to their execution, guaranteeing supplies and the labor force in a timely manner, avoiding surprises and improvisation.

At the same time, we must be familiar with and manage all financing possibilities, use credits more efficiently, and be responsible with payments.

Making efficient use of the valuable human resources and qualified and scientific workforce that we have attained with the great educational work of the Revolution; defending national production, mobilizing all our potential to produce more and efficiently, is the only thing that will allow us to grow, beyond climatic effects and financial stains.

We must also prevent superfluous spending on government activity, achieve real control over resources, and take advantage of the experiences of other socialist nations such as China, Vietnam and Laos.

Government management should be directed with greater impetus toward the demand for quality services, and to avoiding shortcomings that cause inconveniences and irritation among the population. Never forget that as public servants, our greatest objective is the people's wellbeing.

Addressing the current situation in a realistic and objective manner is what allows us to determine a sustainable economic plan for the year 2019, based on solid foundations that, despite the difficulties, favor development in the priority activities for growth, and contribute to the gradual restoration of the nation's financial credibility.

Compatriots:

2019 will be a year of order. The plan will be based on the country's hard currency income and payments, paying more debts than outstanding credits, and complying with the maximum punctuality possible in the payment of commitments.

There is no other way to draw up the plan; otherwise, it would be to propose something that will not be fulfilled and that would become unmanageable.

I must emphasize that what is foreseen in this plan is the minimum to be achieved. We must generate wealth to have more. Its execution must be supported by an adequate administration of the budget, in which we must promote all income possibilities, the reduction of budgetary expenses in the enterprise sector, and the greatest possible reduction of the budget deficit.

Achieving the proposed objectives requires an in-depth process of discussing the plan, a high level of control, and involving everyone to defend it among all.

The sugar harvest, an important economic activity not only for the production of sugar, but for its ability to generate liquid income, its contribution to electricity generation from biomass, the production of animal feed and derivatives, has started by surpassing the main indicators. The important thing now is not to let problems accumulate that undermine a good performance in what remains of the campaign.

As part of the process of computerization of society, the digitalization of television advances, and mobile phone Internet service was launched, a new possibility for citizens and a clear expression of the government's political will to carry out this program with our own efforts and talent, with no space for the interference that some disguise with perverse offers and colonizing plans.

Investments in solar parks and wind farms continue, while those related to power generation from biomass in bioelectric plants have begun, supporting the plans for change in the energy matrix, and the increase in the use of renewable energy sources.

In order to broadly discuss the country's development projections, we have considered it appropriate to convene an extraordinary session of the National Assembly in the first quarter of next year, which we will devote to analysis of the National Economic and Social Development Plan through 2030, in its three stages, and the report on the state of implementation of the Economic and Social Policy Guidelines of the Party and the Revolution.

Moreover, measures related to self-employment activity have recently come into force. The majority of the population accepts them and considers that they are necessary for the organization and control of this process.

In this regard, I want to specify our point of view on this activity.

Self-employed workers are not enemies of the Revolution, they are the result of the process of updating the economic model, they have solved problems that burdened the State and for which it was sometimes inefficient. They have rescued trades that life proved necessary.

We have recognized the non-state sector as a complement to the economy and there is no intention of preventing them from prospering, but their operations must be within the law.

We know that we can rely on most of them to boost and revitalize the economy. We must erase from some minds the prejudices toward their work, which do us as much damage as those inspectors who come to be corrupt and generate distrust and insecurity.

For its proper exercise, we must create conditions that encourage compliance with the new regulations, and contribute to the real order of the activity. The officials responsible for ensuring the application of the rules must act with ethics, rigor and fairness, and erase the bad image caused by the corrupt behavior of some.

Nor do we ignore that private workers of some modalities have expressed disagreement with these regulations, but not from a perspective of cooperation with the population, but because they are against an order that puts an end to illicit enrichment, which will not be allowed.

We know that there are still attempts to turn the non-state sector into an enemy of the revolutionary process, but they will not succeed in dividing

us. For this we count on the commitment of our self-employed workers and of state institutions.

Deputies:

It is also necessary to clarify that there are those who try to distort the scope and objectives of Decree 349, associating it with an instrument to exercise artistic censorship. I speak of entities external to our Culture, who have never been concerned with, and have remained silent in the face of the proliferation of banality, vulgarity, violence, rudeness, discrimination against women, sexism and racism present in the most varied expressions that, undermining the cultural policy of the Revolution, are exhibited in state and private public spaces, some of which are not even legally recognized.

We know very well where the instructions come from, with the aim of confusing, dividing, discouraging and demobilizing.

It is evident that the aforementioned Decree, due to its importance, should have been further discussed and better explained. This is evident in the opinions of the greats of our Culture, who have proven and committed work.

I call on them to accompany us in the task of doing now what we should have done before.

In these essential lessons, based on sincere dialogue, we can discover together how to implement this norm, because it was driven by a need and a demand of artists themselves, to prevent the proliferation of disrespect for cultural policy with pseudo-artistic productions that give an image of a country that we are not, nor have we ever been, nor should we ever be.

I can assure you that this Decree has only one objective: to protect national culture from false artists, unqualified professional practice, and the pseudo-culture generating anti-values, issues denounced in multiple spaces by our creators, writers and artists.

Artistic creation in Cuba is free and will continue to be so, as postulated in the Constitution, and cultural institutions have the responsibility to apply this norm with total adherence to these purposes.

Compañeras and compañeros:

The issues debated in this Assembly require priority attention from the Council of Ministers. In this regard, we are developing a work system based on exchanges with the people, visits to territories and communities, links with the collectives that are the protagonists of economic and social development programs.

We approach them to listen, argue, clarify, untangle and solve problems; address complaints, misunderstandings and mistakes.

We are interested in promoting the accountability of those we oversee, favoring direct communication with the people, through the media and on social networks, systematically.

We want to open paths for scientific research to have space in each process and provide innovation, and we need to promote the computerization of society.

We systematized the monitoring and assurance of development programs, promoting a collective direction and leadership style, and defending with discipline and commitment the guidance of our Party.

We have convened and continue an ethical battle against corruption, illegalities, addictions and social indiscipline, manifestations that are antagonistic and incompatible with our present and future.

What has been done is still insufficient, and what has been achieved is nothing with respect to our purposes as the Government of the Revolution, but we want to express thanks for the support and understanding of the Cuban women and men who inhabit our geography. We owe ourselves to them.

There are many questions to address and answer. We will provide answers to as many as possible, and for those to which we do not have answers for the moment, we will not cease in the effort to find them.

Cuban women and men:

The year 2018 has been intense, in the midst of a complex international context due to the increase in imperialist hegemony that mutilates multilateralism in international relations.

Latin America and the Caribbean, our Great Homeland, is no stranger to these influences.

Cuba is accused by the empire of being the source of what they consider "the great evils of the region." The blockade tightens, and financial persecution escalates, to hinder the development of the country.

The result obtained on November 1, in ten successive votes of the United Nations General Assembly, demonstrated the overwhelming support that Cuba enjoys in its fight against the blockade – an aggressive, anachronistic, failed policy that causes enormous damages to the Cuban people, constitutes the main obstacle to our development, and is a violation of human rights. We are greatly appreciative to all the governments that contributed to the demand for its end.

That same day, the United States National Security Adviser, with extremely aggressive and disrespectful language, announced in Miami new measures that reinforce the blockade, which together with other events and threats, foretell that his government is moving toward a course of confrontation with Cuba.



U.S. imperialism has reiterated the validity of the Monroe Doctrine and attacks progressive governments and processes, attempts to reverse the progress made in terms of integration and social justice in the region; carries out a systematic and enormous communications and cultural manipulation operation; and persecutes and criminalizes leftist political forces and leaders, popular movements and social organizations, with the aim of imposing neoliberalism. It also tries to destroy the genuinely Latin American and Caribbean cooperation and collaboration mechanisms, such as CELAC and UNASUR.

But the peoples do not bow down or abandon the struggle, as demonstrated in the broad and united XXIV Meeting of the São Paulo Forum, held in this city this past July.

I express our deep gratitude to the Commonwealth Caribbean for its encouraging Statement of Solidarity of December 8, 2018, in honor of the celebration of CARICOM-Cuba Day.

The Declaration of the XVI Summit of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America, ALBA-TCP, held in Havana on December 14, addressed these issues, committed to act decisively in the mobilization and indispensable unity of revolutionary, progressive and popular forces, and expressed full support and solidarity to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Republic of Nicaragua in the face of imperialist and oligarchic hostility.

In Mexico, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador won a historic victory that arouses great sympathy. To him and to the fraternal Mexican people, I thank you for the warm hospitality with which we were received during his inauguration.

In Brazil, the unacceptable conditions and repeated slander by the President-elect of that country to destroy the More Doctors Program, violating the respective agreements with the Pan American Health Organization, have forced us, in defense of the dignity, altruism and recognized professionalism of our health workers, to put an end to Cuban participation, as has been reported in detail to our people and to Brazilian and international public opinion.

Every day, from the remotest corners of the South American giant, messages arrive of gratitude to our doctors, and rejection of the new President's policy that uprooted them from those places where only they went to save lives.

As Lula expressed in a message to our people: "I regret that the prejudice of the new Government against Cubans has been more important than the health of Brazilians living in the most distant and needy communities."

History will document the before and after of our cooperation. In the fortieth edition of the Havana International Festival of New Latin American Cinema, a Brazilian documentary maker brought the entire audience to

their feet just by mentioning our doctors. Media from all over the world have turned their eyes to our medical collaboration for the first time, as a result of the inappropriate remarks of the far-right Brazilian government.

Our health professionals are the paradigm that contraposes the egotism and commercialization of medical services. They are Cuba, and are the most beautiful monument to Fidel's internationalist, humanist work in defense of human rights on a universal scale.

In recent months, we have had intense and fruitful bilateral exchanges, in particular during our official visits to the Russian Federation, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the People's Republic of China, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, whose warm hospitality we are grateful for, and from which stemmed important agreements, to the fulfillment of which we dedicate all our efforts.

The exchanges sustained during our presence in the French Republic and the United Kingdom were also significant. The visit to Havana of the President of the Spanish Government, Pedro Sánchez, was also beneficial.

The commemoration of the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela and the thirtieth anniversary of the battle of Cuito Cuanavale against the apartheid regime was particularly moving.

Dear Compatriots:

What a tremendous year we are seeing off!

If we were to look to symbols alone, it would be enough to consider the 150 years of intense struggle for our independence that 2018 marks, and the 60 years of combat, resistance and creativity of the final triumph, at the first minute of 2019.

We move from one to the other driven by the stunning feat of those who threw themselves into the scrubland, sometimes with no more weapons than their sense of shame, and who faced limitless hunger and scarcity to make us free.

Men and women of inherited properties and wealth, who renounced them to create a new nation.

This year, a local museum of the former mother country has lent us a chair that belonged to Maceo. The throne of the bravest of our Generals was made from a palm trunk. He did not take an elegant and soft chair from those who then subjected his country. That is why those who, even on killing him, could never overcome our vocation for liberty, kept it as a war trophy.

Exactly 60 years after the death of Maceo, in December of 1956, Fidel, Raúl and their compañeros of the Granma, took up again the spirit of that warrior and set up camp in the mountains. The rebel Command would be as Creole and sovereign as the Bronze Titan's chair.

Also made of palm boards and a palm leaf roof is Fidel's house in La Plata, the site never conquered by the army of the dictatorship, guarded as it was and will always be, by the humble inhabitants of those lands, where the brook of the Sierra Maestra flows sonorous and free.

We are a nation marked by such great independence endeavors, that also saved us from egoistic dependencies on material possessions, when the price of obtaining them was freedom.

The symbols to which I referred, those signs and essences that History leaves us, speak to us of a country with character, that always knew that "poverty passes, what does not pass is dishonor," as the Apostle of the worn frock coat said, who gathered money and wills for the Necessary War, without ever taking a penny.

That character, that comes to us from grandparents and parents, that for the Homeland even brings tears to our eyes, but above all, launches us at full gallop against anyone who wants to harm it, is not, as some believe, the History book that the young generation can not read.

To feel passion and pride for what we are, at the same time as impatience and anguish for what we do not achieve, rather than distress, makes the transition between these two years a triumphal arch, crowned by everything we have devoted, and the certainty that to fight is a victory (Applause).

We always push for more. And with all the living generations together, in tribute to those who sacrificed everything, because the road toward the conquest of that bit more, always pending, was guarded by the peace and unity of all Cubans.

On behalf of a generation proud of being not a replacement, but continuity, I want to express to you the deep commitment that moves us to struggle relentlessly to measure up to history, to our heroes and the people, inseparable in sentiment and fidelity.

Today we have come to render an account of our work and to commit ourselves to more: to promote everything that allows us to move forward and overcome, along with our own limitations and in the face of an economic war, financial persecution and the tightened blockade.

The greatest motivation is provided by the 60th anniversary of the Revolution, with its indelible lessons that it is possible to overcome all obstacles if the people accompany us.

It will be, without doubt, another year of challenges. But, as Martí said on speaking of the soul of the Revolution, and the duty of Cuba: "The Cuban people expect nothing from the revolution that the revolution can not provide."

We will move forward. And we will continue to be victorious. That's what the forefathers of the nation taught us. To this the dignified and heroic

people of Céspedes, Mariana, Maceo, Gómez, Martí, Mella, Villena, Haydeé, Abel, Celia, Frank, Vilma, Camilo, Che, Almeida, Fidel, Raúl and their comrades in the struggle summon us everyday, who by accompanying us, honor us.

On February 24, in the Referendum to ratify the Constitution, Cuba will be reaching a high point of the 150 years we have celebrated, and the 60th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution, the Revolution of Fidel and Raúl, which we will celebrate on January 1st.

We will say yes and we will triumph again. Because we are Cuba.

Congratulations to all our people for the New Year.

Ever onward to victory!

¡Patria o Muerte!

¡Venceremos!

(Ovation.)

# **We Remain Committed To A Possible Better World And We Believe That The Basis Of That Desire Is Education**

## **Speech at the International Pedagogy Congress (February 8, 2019)**

I believe that La Colmenita has moved us all, it excited Sosita, we are all thrilled, and it is good that educators do not lose that ability to be moved, because when we get excited, we are able to inspire our students (Applause).

Dear educators, representatives of international organizations;

Ministers participating in the 2019 Pedagogy event;

Colleagues from around the world (Applause and exclamations of: "Thank you!"):

First of all, our congratulations to the best teacher-researchers of our country. (Applause)

When I was invited to close this event, I asked myself what to say to you, how to honor the work of the founders of this gathering, one of the broadest, most diverse and most popular educational events in the world.

How to summarize precisely, when today we need so even more, the dialogue that for so many years the participants in this Pedagogy Congress held with our Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro Ruz, educator of the masses, and with comrade José Ramón Fernández, educator of educators. (Applause)

But it has been enough for me to be twice among you over these days to sense their presence. Not only because you mention them or quote their words, but because in the program and in what I have been able to learn of the different symposia, workshops and meetings, the great motivation remains alive and active: the unity of educators. Not only Latin Americans or Ibero-Americans. Educators, such a beautiful word, which means so much.

A quick review of the history of these events reminds us that when they began, the decision to unite for a better world took precedence over all others, an idea that has prevailed over time. Then, you fought against the criminal foreign debt that asphyxiated our peoples, cutting educational budgets in most of the sister nations of the continent. And educators of the region came en masse, not only to gather experiences, but also to bring and share solidarity, which is the most beautiful and useful expression of unity.

It is very difficult to forget the magnitude of the first, and the following encounters, which became extraordinary events for the capital, for its

schools visited by delegates, and for all Cuba, a country that cannot be ignored when it comes to education, literacy, teacher training, solidary cooperation, progress and shared practices.

With the accumulated experience of 15 previous encounters, you have now focused on the universal agenda directed toward the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal which is aimed to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.”

I would say that here are the best conditions to interpret, thoroughly analyze and make practicable that ideal.

The 60-year history of the Cuban Revolution vouches for that truth, almost like a mathematical axiom. The first step was the Literacy Campaign. Just two years after the revolutionary triumph, Cuba was declared a Territory Free of Illiteracy.

Then came the battle for the sixth and ninth grades, which drove enrollment in worker-campesino schools, to complete the upper middle educational level among workers.

Today we have one of the highest averages of university graduates – 21% of the total population of the country – of Latin America and the Caribbean, and much of the world.

This strength led us to promote and extend our cooperation with the entire Third World, creating literacy programs in our language and in indigenous languages.

And, logically, an event such as this needed to be born and grow, capable of showing and sharing the best experiences – with respect for the diversity and identity of each nation – that among Cuban educators has generated an extraordinary movement from schools, fostering creativity, innovation, experimentation, research and exchanges among them and their colleagues in the world.

As had been said more than once, the Pedagogy Congress is the most important scientific event of the Cuban teaching profession.

And it is also an inexhaustible source of solidarity among our peoples, with expressions of great political and social commitment in each concrete historic moment. The final declarations of each edition attest to what I say.

On Fidel’s passing, a young Cuban singer-songwriter, Raúl Torres, created a song that is like an anthem for Cubans. Although its title is “Cabalgando con Fidel” (Riding with Fidel), many call it “Los agradecidos” (The Grateful), because thus the poet defines those of us who haven’t stopped thinking of him and defending his ideas.

Among the grateful of all professions, are Cuban educators. (Applause). They, you, like Fidel, know that we have much to achieve, and that all that we do for the dissemination of the knowledge that humanity has

accumulated over centuries will never be enough. A lifetime is not sufficient to learn everything. Nor to teach everything.

The merit is in the struggle, to always advance further, not being stopped by the obstacles. The case of this Pedagogy Congress can be cited as an example. Not even in the toughest years of the economic crisis of the 1990s, did these gatherings for the unity of educators cease to be held.

The Pedagogy Congress is the voice of the grateful in Education, of those who work for more and better access to knowledge, aware of what we are lacking, but also conscious of just how much we must defend, save and perfect.

Cuba, in recent months, has become a gigantic Constituent Assembly, on taking our new Constitution to a popular debate, prior to a Referendum, for which on February 24 we will vote Yes en masse, without a doubt.

Teachers and students of all levels are among the segments of the population that discussed with greater depth and enthusiasm the changes and new formulations for our Magna Carta.

I believe that this is due to the fact that, despite the criminal blockade that is being tightened, the financial limitations that hit us and delay the fulfillment of many of our dreams, the Cuban state has ratified, once again, its responsibility in terms of the absolutely free nature of education, from preschool to the conclusion of an undergraduate degree. And even more: to guarantee schools and full employment for graduate teachers at any level. This is something that surprises and is admired by many of our visitors. And it is simply a right, together with that of health, to which the Revolution devotes the largest budgets, as these are universal human rights and fundamental to our Martí inspired ideal of "conquering all justice." (Applause)

Without any chauvinism, I feel that Cuba has long guaranteed that "inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all," something that unfortunately remains an aspiration for many countries.

And the new Constitution reinforces all these concepts, is at the forefront of the most progressive trends in the world, and aspires to more, particularly in terms of quality, as the more educated and better informed people are, not only are they freer, as Martí stated, but they demand more.

Education and culture have the power to expand the horizons of knowledge infinitely. The desire to learn grows in as far as knowledge does.

In the coming months, two new special schools for children with physical and motor disabilities should be inaugurated, stemming from an idea of our First Party Secretary, Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, who was strongly impressed after his recent visit to an emblematic school of Cuban education.

The "Solidarity with Panama" school, inaugurated by Fidel 30 years ago, with all its facilities and services available to children with serious physical and motor disabilities who, nonetheless, achieve impressive development of skills and knowledge, thanks to Special Education, will very soon have the company of similar institutions, strengthened in specialties such as Vocational, Artistic and Scientific Education.

We are also immersed in the repair of those schools damaged by the devastating tornado that hit five municipalities of Havana on the eve of Martí's birthday. And we have proposed to rebuild them even more beautiful and with better facilities for the education of their students. (Applause)

At the same time, the more than 300 teachers from those areas, who were affected to some degree, and yet did not abandon their teaching responsibilities, must be recognized, encouraged, and supported. (Applause)

The extraordinary solidary spirit of our people, the very values that Cuban education shapes, with all its imperfections, which we recognize and constantly criticize, has allowed us to break records in recovery times of basic services.

I believe we owe much to the emphasis that our education places on history, and on its most prestigious protagonists. We are in a period of patriotic commemorations for the 150 years of the beginning of the independence wars, and the 60th anniversary of the revolutionary triumph of 1959.

Our young people know, even though they didn't live it, that Cuba suffered 60 years of dependence on and neocolonial subjugation to the United States. The Revolution, in that same period, 60 years, has erased its consequences of profound inequality, racism, elitist education and exclusion. But schools have a duty to maintain that awareness in each generation that is educated in our classrooms.

We defend and exalt historical memory, culture and identity as a shield of sovereignty, "so that our children will not have to beg on bended knee, for the homeland which their forefathers won for us on their feet," as Rubén Martínez Villena said, a young Cuban poet and revolutionary of the 1930s.

The current technologies have imposed new communication codes, and we are committed to their knowledge and healthy, critical, creative use.

Fidel was the first to realize the value of the Internet to truly democratize communications. He said that it appeared as if created for revolutionaries, due to the ability to spread messages at a negligible cost and with an infinite reach.

But he also warned us of the risks of plunging into the oceans of information of the Network of Networks, without the necessary knowledge and critical awareness to use it without being used.



The greatest and most serious problems of the world today are settled in this immense network, that connects us subtly or openly, and it is necessary to confront such scenarios with sufficient knowledge to avoid being objects at the service of the worst interests, or uncritical subjects of an environment that compromises even the survival of the species.

Back to schools. Without them, the most wonderful instrument of human intelligence would be just a useless toy, or a mirror to satisfy vanity. With them, with the tools that they contribute and the critical awareness that they shape, a better world will be possible in a shorter time.

In her opening remarks, Minister Ena Elsa Velásquez spoke to you of the four pillars on which government management is built. The fundamental aspect is the connection with the people, and addressing their problems and demands, appealing to the participation of all, and the search for more than one alternative solution, in a permanent exercise of communication.

For this management to be effective, it is necessary to apply knowledge in depth, in the use of new technologies, and we are committed to this with the talent and contributions of our technical schools and our universities. But, at the same time, we defend an education that informs students of the political complexities of today's world, of the causes and origins of conflicts, the interventionist and overwhelming vocation of empires, and the right of the peoples to defend their dignity and sovereignty, as well as to value integration among nations of a similar composition, development, and interests, as a destiny essential to survival.

That knowledge is what makes us despise wars, defend just causes, practice solidarity with those who suffer, resist and overcome all forms of punishment that they attempt to impose on us for trying to forge our own path.

Under that conviction, we consider any scenario as useful to demand respect for International Law, non-interference or intervention in Venezuela (Applause), an end to the blockade and the threats against Cuba and sister nations like Venezuela and Nicaragua. (Applause)

In a text that every educator of our lands should know —“Maestros ambulantes” (Itinerant Teachers) — José Martí said: “Men need someone to stir their compassion often, and cause their tears to flow, and to give their souls the supreme benefit of feeling generous; through a marvelous law of natural compensation, he who gives of himself grows, and he who turns inward and lives from small pleasures, is afraid to share them with others, and only thinks avariciously of cultivating his appetites, loses his humanity and becomes loneliness itself. He carries in his breast all the dreariness of winter. He becomes in fact and appearance an insect.

“(...) Men grow, they grow physically and visibly, when they learn something, when they begin to possess something, and when they have done some good.

"Only fools or egoists talk of misfortune. Happiness exists on earth, and it is won through prudent exercise of reason, knowledge of the harmony of the universe, and constant practice of generosity."

He wrote this in May 1884, but they are words that have the value of eternity, like almost everything we know about Martí.

Compañeras and compañeros:

I allow myself to approach these words to thank you for your presence here, your contributions to Cuban, Latin American and universal education. To express our permanent willingness to cooperate and exchange experiences and knowledge. To confirm that in Pedagogy, as in the Cuban Revolution, there is no rupture, there is continuity. (Applause)

We remain committed to a possible better world and we believe that the basis of that desire is education.

Thank you very much for making it possible every day.

See you at the next Pedagogy event! (Ovation)

# **The Association Of Caribbean States Must Continue To Be The Mainstay Of Greater Caribbean Unity**

## **Speech at the Association of Caribbean States in Nicaragua (March 29, 2019)**

Compañero Comandante Daniel Ortega Saavedra, President of the sister Republic of Nicaragua and of the VIII Meeting of the Association of Caribbean States;

Compañera Rosario Murillo, Vice President of the Republic of Nicaragua;

Distinguished heads of state and government and heads of delegations;

Her Excellency Ambassador June Soomer, general secretary of the Association;

Dear delegates and guests:

Our national poet, Nicolás Guillén, a singular voice among the great voices of this region, dedicated a short poem to the sea that joins us, with which I would like to greet you. It is entitled "The Caribbean" and goes:

In the aquarium of the Great Zoo,  
swims the Caribbean.

This enigmatic marine animal  
has a crystal crest,  
a blue back, a green tail,  
a belly of compact coral,  
gray hurricane fins.

In the aquarium, this inscription:

"Be careful: it bites."

This verse of Guillén's speaks of the crystal crest that makes our Caribbean fragile. And also of the fierce beast that lives here. Fragility and ferocity distinguish us. Fragility and ferocity unite us. And unity, we know well, makes us strong.

Born of this strength, sustained only by unity, is the very timely Managua Declaration adopted by this meeting, with the title: "Joining forces in the Caribbean to confront climate change," an issue that has generated growing concern over the last few decades.

As the Comandante en Jefe of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, warned almost 30 years ago, during the Earth Summit held in Río de Janeiro, in 1992, "An important biological species is in danger of extinction as a result of the rapid and progressive elimination of its natural living conditions: man."

The Caribbean knows this well since it often suffers the impact. Surely for this reason, since its Second Summit in Santo Domingo, in 1999, the Association of Caribbean States has included among its lines of work agreement and cooperation on climate change and disaster risk reduction.

The causes of climate change have been identified by the scientific community and recognized by practically all governments.

But neither efforts made or international commitments in environmental matters are sufficient to stop the alarming increase in global temperature and stabilize it in the area of 1.5°C, as developing countries demand.

More developed nations, who are mainly responsible for today's unsustainable situation, must honor the commitment to provide at least 100 billion USD a year to support the work of developing countries.

The global commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions must prevail based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, within a framework of international cooperation that ensures the resources and necessary transfer of technologies to developing countries.

Required is the modification of patterns of production and consumption that have been imposed on us, and the promotion of a fair, democratic, and equitable international economic order, to confront climate change and achieve sustainable development.

Mr. President:

Each of us understands what is being talked about. The intensity and persistence of natural phenomena of various kinds in the Greater Caribbean constantly punish us with the adverse effects of climate change, particularly developing small island states.

Living with hurricanes has conditioned our lives; modifying our geographies and affecting migration. And it has also educated us in the need to devote more study to these phenomena that plague us and work to reverse the damage they cause. The Cuban Revolution was obliged to learn this lesson very early on, the hard way, during Hurricane Flora in 1963, which left the former province of Oriente under water and took the lives of more than a thousand people.

More recent history has shown that, in the worst moments, working together has saved us. We firmly believe that only our unity and mutual cooperation will allow us to face the dangers and effects of meteorological events and assume the subsequent recovery.

Solidarity must be a fundamental principle for the members of the Association of Caribbean States

Along this very line of thought, today, I would like to reiterate the unwavering support of Cuba, under all circumstances, to the right of small island states and developing nations to receive special and differential treatment in access to trade and investment.

We also support the just and necessary demand to receive cooperation according to a nation's real situation and needs, and not on the basis of per capita income statistics that classify them as middle income countries and exclude them from access to financial resources, indispensable for development.

We welcome the election of Barbados as President of the Board of Directors of the Association's Council of Ministers. We express our fraternal congratulations for this and for the country's willingness to contribute during this period.

Dear delegates:

The President of the United States, the Secretary of State, and the National Security Advisor declare that the Monroe Doctrine is as relevant today as the day it was written, and that it is the country's formal policy, as in the time of expansion and intervention of the United States in our region, of military aggressions and impositions.

These statements and consequent actions challenge our Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, signed by heads of state and government, in January 2014, in Havana, on the occasion of the Second CELAC Summit.

We declared then our permanent commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes in order to banish forever the use of force, and threats to use force, in the region; to strictly comply with the obligation not to intervene, directly or indirectly, in the internal affairs of any other state; to foster relations of friendship and cooperation among ourselves and with other nations, regardless of differences in political, economic, and social systems or levels of development; to practice tolerance and coexist in peace as good neighbors; to the intention of Latin American and the Caribbean states to fully respect the inalienable right of all to choose their own political, economic, social, and cultural system, as an essential condition for ensuring peaceful coexistence among nations; to the promotion in the region of a culture of peace based, among others, on the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Culture of Peace.

The Proclamation also urges all member states of the international community to fully respect these purposes and principles in their relations with CELAC member states.

In this context, our nations must continue working together. It is our duty to protect peace, amongst us all, and preserve what has been achieved, confident that the current situation of confrontation and threats will be overcome.

Cuba, in particular, has been subject to an irrational and perverse tightening of the blockade by the United States, whose administration has unleashed, at the same time, a campaign of distortions, lies, and pretexts

to sustain a policy of persecution and harassment that the international community openly rejects and condemns.

I would like to express our profound gratitude to all the countries of the region for their opposition to this irrational, illegal, and cruel policy against our people.

Beyond political or ideological differences, I call on all Caribbean governments to defend peace and oppose military aggression and the escalation of coercive economic measures against Venezuela that seriously damage its citizens and put the stability of the entire region at risk.

We also reiterate our solidarity and support for the government of Reconciliation and National Unity of the Republic of Nicaragua in the face of destabilization attempts, and we celebrate the negotiation process to ensure peace and preserve the social and economic gains achieved in this sister nation.

Faithful to our vision of defending unity within diversity, as on innumerable occasions the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, Army General Raul Castro Ruz, has asserted in forums like this one, we call on you to continue working together, concentrating on all that unites us, incomparably superior to the little that separates us, and to prioritize the fulfillment of agreements reached by the XXIII Council of Ministers regarding the strengthening and revitalization of the Association.

The Association of Caribbean States must continue to be the mainstay of Greater Caribbean unity, which is the only alternative given the enormous challenges we face.

Member states of this organization share the responsibility to avoid damaging the consensus that we have built together over the years, and to continue fostering solidarity, as an indispensable premise to develop actions on all the issues that are part of the organization's mandate.

Cuba will continue working in favor of this unity and for the consolidation of our Association, and hope that this important meeting will contribute decisively to the effort.

Thank you very much!

# **History Teaches Us That When There Is Unity Of Objectives And A Sense Of The Nationhood All Obstacles Can Be Overcome**

**Speech held at the National Assembly of People's Power (April 13, 2019)**

Dear Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee;

Compañero Machado;

Comandantes de la Revolución;

President Lazo;

Dear deputies:

It is impossible to take the floor in this extraordinary session of the National Assembly of People's Power, in which we have focused the debate on economic issues, without making any obligatory and heartfelt reference to the historical significance of the event we experienced just three days ago, in a solemn session of our Parliament.

José Martí, although he did not live the events of April 10, 1869, described them with words that 150 years later still impress. Through him we can better understand the history of that small town where, on that day, the seed of the nation was planted, when its name was inscribed in the memory of the country, to travel, in just one month, from this high point to ashes.

Twenty-three years had passed when he published in the newspaper Patria the following, I'll quote only excerpts: "Free Guaimaro was never more beautiful than in the days when it entered into glory and sacrifice (...). The families of the heroes, eager to see them, came to where their heroism occurred, by putting themselves into the law, they would be great (...). As brides came the wives, and the children, as when they talk about the supernatural (...). Coming together were Oriente, Las Villas and the center, the injured local souls spontaneously composed the national soul, and the revolution entered the republic."

There are no words more perfect than those of Martí in this description of how the national soul was composed when "the revolution entered the republic."

Considering the events and the role of men in them, the Apostle stated in 1892: "Neither Cuba nor history will ever forget that those who came first in the war became the first to demand respect for the law."

Neither Cuba nor history, we can repeat today, will forget the ceremony of last Wednesday the 10th, and its links with the event that defined us as a nation, on April 10, a century and a half ago.

Our Army General, who was first in war, has also been first in proposing, conducting, and demanding the imperative updating of the law, out of respect for the law.

The chroniclers of these times will not have the challenge, overcome brilliantly by Martí, of telling the story of the serious disagreements among our founding heroes. Precisely thanks to 151 years of struggle for our emancipation, today we are not arguing, but rather proclaiming.

Nor are we obliged, as were our founding heroes, to construct a government before winning freedom. Freedom was first rescued and sustained by more than a generation of revolutionaries, over hard years of creation and resistance.

Thus, the Constitution we recently proclaimed has a great history. Its roots lie in the first that was born fighting within the heart of the Republic in Arms, and later reaffirmed in three constitutions during the war, to be reborn in 1901, under the worse circumstances, in an assembly with its hands tied by Yankee intervention.

In 1940, another Constitution, the conquest of several generations of Cubans, was celebrated although not implemented. It was violated and buried by a despot, but its death lit the spark of a Revolution that was destined to fulfill its precepts of fundamental justice.

Many years later, in 1976, the people inscribed their most radical aspirations in another Constitution, the first socialist one, that after a few reforms brought us to this Magna Carta, proclaimed this April 10, precisely in honor of this history.

I always say that the recently proclaimed Constitution is strong because it draws on this history of intense search for a national guide, that we have described briefly, and the more recent, too, and from long months of analysis, debates, and modifications that involved in its construction the majority of the people, who later supported it irrefutably in a referendum.

One parallel between that historic April 10, and the date three days ago, points to other vital links: we do not need to decide on a flag for our ceremony, because in 1869 the red triangle was chosen, which "proudly waved in the fight, / without a childish or romantic boast; / the Cuban who does not believe / should be flogged as a coward," as we learned with the unsurpassed verses of Bonifacio Byrne.

Nor can it be said that a woman demanded here the place she deserved.

From Ana Betancourt to Vilma Espín, women's contribution to the Revolution has been boundless. And justice has finally been served. Women are the majority in this Assembly, as is all important matters in our society.

But there are other moments that equal past and present times. All of Cuba, like Guáimaro 150 years ago, has a tenacious and avaricious enemy lurking nearby.



And just as the Spanish army viciously attacked Guaimaro, a month after that beautiful day of the first national Constitution, the neighboring empire threatens, again, to assault Cuba. And in fact it attacks every day with foolish measures that are escalating in hostility and in viciousness.

Guáimaro's response to the Spanish assault, as Bayamo had before, was to burn everything that could not be defended. And that was also described by Martí as if he had seen it: "The mothers did not cry, nor did the men hesitate, nary a weak heart was to be seen as the cedars and mahogany fell. With their own hands, they lit the bonfires to the holy city, and when the night closed in, the sacrifice was reflected in the sky (...). The people went into the forest (...). And a good hand hid the constitution in the ground. It must be found!"

This is how Martí concludes this beautiful piece of journalism, entitled "El 10 de abril."

We are passionate about history, it's true. But if we return to it once and again, it is not only because of the pleasure our national glory provides. We return because within it there are formidable reserves of Cuban morality, always under attack, always ready to turn any material possession to ashes before raising our arms for the adversary to chain them.

What Martí asked us to find in 1892 in this "entry of the revolution into the republic," will always have a pending task. In our case, it is the permanent battle to maintain our sovereignty and strive for all justice with the greatest degree of prosperity possible.

The current U.S. administration that dismisses multi-literalism and has decided to return the world's to its worse times, shamelessly making threats of insolent intervention, and constant ultimatums, including the invasion option, has publicly stated, more than once, its intention to destroy any development alternative apart from the savage capitalism it attempts to promote in the region.

Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba are nations with political projects that do not accept the version of the Monroe Doctrine followed by the Trump administration, which, unable to keep its election promises of industrial recovery and national greatness, is sinking into a morass of ridiculous lies to assert that three Latin American nations, struggling to overcome the underdevelopment they inherited, threaten the powerful empire.

They have been busy working against Venezuela, repeating the same script used in criminal aggressions against Cuba since the first years of the Revolution, including state terrorism and pressure on other countries to break regional unity.

The novelty is in non-conventional war tactics that range from the symbolic to very real, from fake news, lies wrapped in novel false trappings, to sabotage of computer networks that sustain the country's functioning. The empire literally cut off Venezuelans' lights and water. At the same time

their spokespeople and latest puppet seethe before the world because the Bolivarian government rejects false humanitarian aid.

Hypocrites, criminals, thieves of Venezuela's national treasury: there is no other way to describe those attempting to defeat the courageous people with hunger and deprivation, stealing their financial resources, while sharpening their teeth to devour the riches nature has given this sister nation in abundance, which Bolivar and Chávez raised to a place of honor on the map of America, with their contribution to the continent's independence.

We cannot underestimate the escalation of this aggression. Beyond the threats, typical of these political merchants, with the rise to decision-making positions of deceitful, mediocre, criminal politicians, financial persecution has increased and the blockade of Cuba tightened.

They have pushed the precarious relations with our country back to the lowest level, fabricating false acoustic incidents, channeling millions of dollars to the counterrevolution and political subversion, issuing dishonest, spurious lists, and trying to activate the hateful Helms-Burton Law, in an attempt to return us to the beginning of this story, when we were a slave nation of another empire.

This year, they have focused on giving us deadlines for the possible implementation of Title III of this slave law, which is what it should really be called. They have done so year after year since 1996, in the style of capital pardons. Now they are putting it off for a month, a few days, with arrogant threats, like someone holding a sword over our heads, ready to cut them off, if we don't surrender.

What is the entire Helms-Burton, if not the 60-year blockade made law?

What more can they do after 60 years of persecution, aggression, and threats?

This past April 10, the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, said here:

"We have been warning of the aggressive actions unleashed by the U.S. government against the Latin American and Caribbean region. It does so in the name of the Monroe Doctrine, with an arrogant McCarthyist contempt for socialism, for the self-determination of peoples, and the sovereign rights of countries in the region."

As he has alerted us, all indications are that the blockade is being tightened around Cuban sovereignty, reinforcing the blockade, especially the financial persecution. Pressure from the United States is creating obstacles to financing and credit from third countries; while internally we are still held back by administrative inefficiency, an importing mentality, the lack of conservation, and insufficient income from exports, among other evils, from which we cannot exclude cases of corruption and illegalities, unacceptable today, as always, in the Revolution.

Faced with this map of tremendous challenges, we run the risk of believing that there is no way out. But history has something to tell us. Fidel, Raúl, Almeida, Camilo, Che, the generation of our parents and grandparents, with less experience and even fewer resources, confronted more serious, darker moments, and emerged victorious.

History shows us that when we have a correct strategy, when there is unity of objectives, and a sense of nationhood, all obstacles can be overcome.

The difficult present panorama, that has been described, imposes two absolute priorities: preparation for defense and the economic battle, at the same time.

The strategy is to work without rest on alternatives, already designed, without abandoning a single one of our objectives directed toward greater wellbeing for our people.

To those who arrogantly and disdainfully ignored the call made for the world to be open to Cuba, we will respond by showing that, yes, we heard the appeal and are opening ourselves even more to those who act sovereignly in the interest of promoting and developing common policies to support the survival of the human species, as Fidel said at the Earth Summit in 1992.

This philosophy moves us when we call for reflection and discussion of economic issues.

Today we have evaluated progress on the implementation of the Guidelines. And it is very important that this information has been shared, because it clarifies for us just how intense and complex the work has been, and above all, what remains to be done.

What has been implemented over the last decade is no small thing: 206 policies, at the rate of 20 per year. In 2018 alone, 47 were approved and the rate of implementation rose, thanks to our greater experience, organization, and participation from Central State Administration bodies.

The government and Party's constant monitoring of the implementation, through its fundamental programs, has allowed us to note negative outcomes and experiences. And this differentiated analysis has not only facilitated corrective action, but also helped avoid the repetition of errors, as the Party's First Secretary has noted. Needed is more attention to detail in preparation, organization, and training in every process, experiment, and procedure, for every person involved in these.

We likewise advocate the incorporation of jurists, from the very conception of policies, in the design of legal norms, so that they are coherent with the fundamental objectives and protect our state apparatus from distortions that could be generated by volunteerism and improvisation.

Last but not least, we are obliged to speed up the process as much as possible, carefully defining the route in timelines for implementation. Thus far, we have not been able to achieve this.

With equal emphasis, we have analyzed the elaboration and advances of the National Social and Economic Plan through 2030.

The objective analysis of the country's current conditions and the international environment, have led us to propose economic planning in three stages:

2019- 2021, 2022- 2026, and 2027- 2030.

But the current conjuncture requires us, realistically, to focus on the first, fully aware of the additional difficulties we face, which could become worse.

For this, we have identified six strategic sectors that have the greatest impact on the economy, in which efforts and resources will be concentrated, without ignoring others.

These sectors are: tourism; the biotechnology-pharmaceutical industry; the electro-energetic related to renewable resources; food production; the export of professional services; and construction.

To say this is in good Cuban: the difficult situation requires us to set clear, well defined priorities, to avoid returning to the hard times of the Special Period.

Today we have the advantage of a more diversified, internationally integrated economy; tourist development; the biotechnology-pharmaceutical industry; greater potential for exports; more construction capacity, a water distribution system, transportation; communications; and untapped potential for savings and the replacement of imports, which we must take better advantage of.

We are intent on developing government work with more efficient public and enterprise management; with fewer obstacles and less bureaucracy; greater transparency and participation; direct, ongoing links with the grassroots; more efficient social communication; more scientific research and a more active role on the part of universities, based on demand and needs, with greater impact on the economy and production.

With the strengthening of the socialist state enterprise, our greatest productive force; with our ears alert to those with knowledge and experience to contribute; with a constant view toward the provinces and communities; with deep and astute legislative work; with greater autonomy for municipalities; and regular accountability for those assuring development programs.

With no fear of change; chipping away at problems; taking full advantage of our strengths in collective leadership and advocating with discipline and commitment the orientations of our Party.

Unleashing a permanent ethical battle against corruption and illegalities; ordering and strengthening non-state economic management; revitalizing our communities; and promoting beauty and a culture of detail as everyday practices.

Being accountable to the people and encouraging their indispensable participation in the solution of every problem. Generalizing best practices. Overcoming the inertia of the tired. Spreading the enthusiasm and optimism of the committed. Understanding that the beauty of the worst moment lies in the extent of the challenges.

The list of tasks is infinite, but I would like to dwell on those that require more immediate action and I urge everyone to join us in assuming them: First, the updating of the Economic Plan based on the most difficult scenarios.

We intend to immediately launch pending economic measures related to demands and needs; the reorganization of domestic commerce; the performance of the enterprise system, agricultural and non-agricultural cooperatives and self-employment.

Our government work will be focused on agriculture, export production, tourism, the replacement of imports (with domestic goods), foreign investment and productive linkages with all national industries possible.

Now more than ever it is essential to save and manage resources carefully, fundamentally energy, so that its use contributes to greater productivity; appropriately use credit and different forms of financing, with more emphasis on investment.

Under these circumstances, it is essential to meet and take advantage of all the potential present in human resources and the qualified workforce we have.

We will continue advancing in the process of computerization of society and working hard to improve food supplies, housing, and transportation, the quality of services, even in the midst of asphyxiating financial persecution that makes the importing of goods and resources of primary necessity particularly difficult, and sometimes impossible.

Compañeras and compañeros:

Awaiting this legislature are months and perhaps years of intense work, but we must advance as quickly as possible so that the Constitution is expressed in laws that are more in tune with our times and needs.

And we have no right to delay changes longer than absolutely necessary.

We assume the mandate to change everything that needs to be changed and correct everything that hinders and delays progress toward prosperity in the shortest time and with the highest quality.

What will not change will be our attitude toward those who hold their sword over us.

The answer is: No, imperialist gentlemen, we Cubans do not surrender, nor do we accept laws on our affairs that are not within the bounds of our Constitution. In Cuba, Cuban men, and of course women, govern.

Title III (of the Helms-Burton) is no worse than I or II, they are part of the toolkit used against the entire people of Cuba, simply to rob us of our lands, steal our homes, take possession of the few natural resources, and seduce and buy our people. All this to punish us for the bad example so many oppressed peoples would like to follow.

No one is going to steal from us, not by seduction or by force, "the homeland that our forefathers won on foot", as Rubén Martínez Villena said in his forceful verses.

Cuba continues to have confidence in its strengths, in its dignity and also in the strength and dignity of other sovereign, independent nations. But we continue to believe in the U.S. people, in the homeland of Lincoln, who are ashamed of those who violate universal law in the name of the entire nation.

And take note, if history holds answers, that on a day like this, April 11, 1959, exactly 60 years ago, Fidel said, and with this I will conclude: "Our people will be greater, the greater the obstacles we face; history will say more of our people, the more difficulties that must be overcome; the future will bring more justice, the more we are slandered today; and all that anyone can say will be that a society was organized here which all the world's people could visit to learn what justice was, what democracy was, and we were able to defend this and sustain it, and, although we do not know what fate has in store for us, we do have the certainty to say that our Revolution will triumph because we will be able to defend it, and that our people will perish, if we must perish to defend it."

Let us defend these convictions in massive popular demonstrations, in all of Cuba, this coming May Day.

"See you in the homeland's plazas, because we are Cuba and we are continuity!

Homeland or Death!

We will always triumph!

(Ovation.)

# **Work To Make A Reality Of Everything That You Understand Will Contribute To The Good Of The Nation, To Its Spirituality, To Its Future**

## **Speech at the session of the Union of Cuban Artists and Writers (June 30, 2019)**

Dear writers, artists, creators;

Compañeras and compañeros of the Presidency;

Ministers and deputy ministers present:

First of all, accept a warm greeting from the Army General (Raúl Castro) which I bear.

Your IX Congress has concluded. I am not referring to these days of analysis and debate in the Convention Center, but rather the long months of exchanges and contributions at the grassroots level. What intelligence and talent! How much was learned from you!

This is a process that we have followed closely in frequent meetings with the Organizing Committee, attempting to find, within the possible, solutions to the most common dissatisfactions, and confirming, once again, the value of delving deeply into the extraordinary creative reserves of the Cuban people. The truth always awaits us there.

Allow me to be one of you: in your dissatisfaction and also in commitment. I am passionate about art and culture in its most diverse expressions, be it Cuban or universal.

The issues addressed here are everyday questions within our family and among friends. Given the professions of my three children and my wife, culture is practically ever present in our lives. Given the pressing needs of the spirit, we would not know how to live without access to the arts.

The deepest emotions, along with patriotic pride, are evoked by our contact with artistic creation. Personally, I cannot separate the feeling of fulfillment, even happiness, from the enjoyment of a given aesthetic. And if it is Cuban culture, the pleasure is redoubled.

What I would like to tell you is that over these months, these days, these hours, more than once we have felt among you, agreeing with what you express and committed to what you are doing.

And by way of what you say and what you do, I know that many of you, at times, have felt yourselves to be in my place, challenged to give continuity to a unique historical process, of universal impact and scope, to a leadership only comparable to the greatness of the Revolution itself, a superior cultural event that transformed a small, backward nation, from the roots, into an unquestionable world power, not for its material resources, but rather for its human and sentimental resources.

When we look at the world and review history, we can say: What a miracle of a country! What a great people we have become! This is what occurs to us when we attend a ballet or dance performance, a musical concert - be it in a grand theater or in one of our neighborhoods - a theatrical work, a film opening, a book or craft fair, a gallery, a rumba jam session, or an art school.

A country blockaded for six decades, cruelly and maliciously persecuted, even in the acquisition of children's medicines, grilled by the most influential media outlets on the planet, which has not been satisfied with resisting and surviving. As I once said: "We are a Revolution that can be proud of having been recounted and sung to, from our beginnings, with the talent and originality of our artists and creators, genuine interpreters of popular wisdom, and of the dissatisfactions and hopes of the Cuba soul, as well.

"And it will continue to be so. Intellectuals, artists, journalists, creators, always accompany us in the endeavor to ensure that this archipelago, which the Revolution put on the world's political map, continues to be recognized for its singular way of fighting as we sing, dance, laugh, and triumph."

Perhaps we have yet to learn, and in some cases we have forgotten, to retell this wonder, but no one can take away from us the pride of being a nation that must be respected, thanks to a Revolution that has always placed human beings at the center.

This is something our generation owes to our founders, since, in the first place, Céspedes and Martí. To the creators who continued their struggles and especially to Fidel, the unquestionable intellectual and guide of the historical generation which, along with the awarding of land and factories to those who work them, taught the people to read, made education universal, created powerful cultural institutions, and at the most difficult times, taught us that "Culture is the first thing that must be saved."

Why did Fidel insist on this idea, one that he repeated so many times? You all surely know, but it's still worth recalling. Because, "There is no prow that can break through a cloud of ideas," as Martí would say.

And Fidel was able to warn us of the risk of losing our greatest strength: our unity, identity, culture, to the colonizing avalanche that was advancing in times of globalization, with massive access to new technologies, promoted by modern merchants, not to enrich, but rather impoverish critical capacity and emancipatory thinking.

Conscious that these rapidly developing technologies could be a powerful tool of education and extension of knowledge, which the Revolution could not renounce, or delay in accessing, Fidel created the University of Computer Sciences (UCI) and, at the same time, alerted Cuban society to the importance of safeguarding our culture.



Then as before, in those meeting at the National Library, that led to his "Words to intellectuals," and shortly thereafter, the creation of UNEAC, Fidel turned to the intellectual and artistic vanguard to confront challenges that only an enlightened individual could see, as Barnet described him once.

While 60 years ago, attempts were defeated to break the visceral unity of that vanguard with its Revolution, that is, of the vanguard itself with its people, later and many times over the years, our adversary continued its efforts uselessly. At the turn of the century, the battle would reach greater dimensions, delivering a blow to progressive forces in the region and the world.

Movements like the Network in Defense of Humanity and cultural projects flowered across the country, demonstrating the extraordinary ability of the vanguard to nurture and sustain the nation's spirituality.

Emerging from the UNEAC founded by Nicolás Guillén, and other universal Cuban men and women, was a lasting commitment to the fate of our national culture that has been reaffirmed over these days. And it is wonderful to see the continuity of this work in an organization led today by one of the youngest delegates to that meeting 58 years ago: the poet, essayist, ethnologist, and intellectual who is, Miguel Barnet.

"Words to intellectuals" has been mentioned several times here. I cannot conceive of a Cuban artist, intellectual, or creator who does not know this speech that marked the Revolution's cultural policy. I cannot imagine any political leader, any functionary or cultural leader who could do without its definitions of principle, to carry out their responsibilities.

But I have always worried that a few phrases are extracted from those words and repeated as slogans. Our duty is to read the speech conscious that, although it is a document for all times, given the principles established for cultural policy, it also demands contextualized interpretation.

Clearly, Fidel proposed a starting point: the relationship between the Revolution, the intellectual and artistic vanguard, and the people. At that time, not everyone could see as clearly as Fidel what artists and intellectuals would understand as they carried out their work: that they were the Revolution; their works were the Revolution, and that the people were the Revolution.

Thus it would be reductionist to limit ourselves to quoting its fundamental phrase: "Within the Revolution, everything; against the Revolution, nothing," overlooking that the Revolution is more than the state, more than the Party, more than the government. Because the Revolution is all of us who make it possible in our lives and work.

And assuming that it would unilaterally and statically guide the Revolution's cultural policy would also contradict the originality and strength of the text. This would be cutting off the wings of its first flight and limiting its convoking spirit.

Today we have the duty to bring its concepts up to date and defend its unquestionable relevance, considering the times in which we live, the new scenarios, the neo-colonizing and banalizing platforms that some would like to impose on us, and the needs, but also the possibilities that, over the years, technological advances imply for us.

New, enriching readings must be given to those words. To develop and strengthen our cultural policy, that has not been written, beyond the "words"... And give it the content demanded of us by current times.

You have done a good amount. As we have noted, you have worked and advanced most when coordinating with other intellectual forces, like those in the universities, and other research centers related to the social sciences and humanities.

Obviously, more and better results have been obtained when creation is supported by new technologies that facilitate the work.

A few days ago, talking with the Organizing Committee, I commented on one of the issues that always generates the most discussion at UNEAC events; relations with tourism, and another more current issue that is cultural policy in venues within the state economy and private ones.

I would like to reiterate today, that in this administration, we have the duty to be consistent. There is not a cultural policy for the state sector and another one for the private. Both sectors must promote and defend themselves, giving space to those who make true art.

And in the specific case of tourism, I have insisted that culture is a key component in creating the productive chains we are interested in promoting. But defending, above all, that tourism does not only bring artists to its facilities, but promotes very intense cultural activity in all our cities and tourist areas, which enriches the cultural life of our people, at the same time that it attracts and wins over visitors. We must be authentic and stop selling "canned" shows, products of a pseudo-culture that responds to profitability more than the pride of showing who we really are.

Cuba is a cultural power, and today tourism, as an economic activity that makes a daily contribution to the budget, the truth is that it still contributes much less than it could if tourists went out to consume goods and services, not only, but above all cultural. (Applause)

In this regard, the system of art schools has a source of revenue that has not been sufficiently exploited, in the export of services, in the creation of artistic learning courses, in which we are really strong, and must establish modalities and prices in line with Cuba's academic level.

Along these same lines of thinking, it is up to UNEAC to be a kind of lightning rod mobilizing forces and actions for the international projection of our cultural industries. Let us not forget that when all the doors closed for Cuba, given our daring pretension to sovereignty and freedom, even

the empire opened a few small windows through which entered music, visual arts, ballet, dance, theater, and other cultural expressions.

The bridges that have been built by Cuban culture - supported by faithful friends over many years of few or no relations between Cuba and the United States - have allowed us to maintain interaction between our two peoples of such strength that the current U.S. administration has proposed definitively putting an end to it.

But intellectuals and artists have also served as cultural ambassadors in Europe, Asia, and Africa, opening doors and contributing to mutual understanding that would have been difficult or impossible without them.

There is much, much work to do in this arena, and you have the talent, the strength, and the knowledge to expand it, contributing much-needed resources to the country for its development.

I also share the concerns of those who feel that some cultural institutions have lagged behind creators. It is unacceptable that it is not understood that all cultural institutions exist via and for the creators and their work (Exclamations and applause), not the other way around, and that bureaucracy and lack of professionalism smother creation.

In the fight against these afflictions, as old as they are harmful, we see a fundamental role for UNEAC. It is necessary to make the organization more proactive at the grassroots level: to investigate which missions are being fulfilled in the interest of those they represent and which areas of discussion they lead. From what positions? With what leadership?

I likewise see UNEAC battling to rescue and elevate the influence and role of cultural criticism. The dearth of serious, well founded analysis of the real values of works and cultural spaces discourages creators and deprives audiences, particularly the young, of timely, guiding criteria to establish artistic standards.

It is an unquestionable fact that Cuban creators resident within the country have works that are comparable to the best created by their contemporaries who live and work in First World nations, with better material conditions and incentives, at times, which has allowed them to access demanding markets.

Why can't we, inside Cuba, manage to insert, disseminate, export the work of those who labor within the country, and for a change promote and replicate what the market has already embraced, and returns to us wrapped in its own rules? (Exclamations and prolonged applause) What do our institutions need to make our most authentic cultural creations flourish?

The complaint is often heard - which must lead to action by artists' organizations - that the enterprise system, or so-called cultural industries related to artistic creation, in terms of production, promotion, and commercialization leave much to be desired.

Culture can and must contribute to the country's Gross Domestic Product and enterprises exist to do this. The dissatisfactions of artists and creators are many, and absolutely all must be addressed, to disseminate and promote their work, while those with the responsibility to do so exercise a kind of parasitism of inaction. (Exclamations and prolonged applause)

Artists have the duty to pay their taxes, but they should not be obliged to contribute to enterprises if they have had nothing to do with their work contracts, with their promotion, or legal protection. (Exclamations and prolonged applause)

It is a well-known "secret" that this parasitism favors corruption, (Exclamations and applause) and masks the failure to fulfill their role in representation and management of opportunities for creators and their works. It is useless and deceitful for the scarce resources available in the country to be recycled among entities without any effect within the real economy. (Exclamations and applause)

Other issues that in my modest opinion require action and reactions by our creators grouped within the UNEAC are related to what some call "cultural mercenaries," those ready to lynch any artist or creator who exalts the Revolution, or sings to the most difficult and noble causes undertaken by progressive forces in our region and the world. (Applause)

We recall the message of Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, on the occasion of UNEAC's 55th anniversary: "Today we are doubly threatened in the field of culture: by subversive projects that attempt to divide us and the colonizing global offensive.

"The UNEAC of the present will continue to confront these difficult challenges with courage, revolutionary commitment, and intelligence."

This colonizing platform promotes the most neoliberal paradigms: minimal state, market forces as much as possible; everything is bought and sold; the alleged, exclusive success of private enterprise. Watch out for those who put the market first, not culture; egoism and personal vanity, not social commitment to culture.

(Exclamations and applause)

It has already been denounced that the current U.S. administration destines new and greater funds to subversion and that it asks those who wish to access the privileged preserves of the empire to give an account of what they do or say on social networks. Given what they don't say and what some say against their own compatriots, it is easy to identify those who aspire to win the grim ticket. Gamblers Martí would call them. I wonder if someone believes that serving someone who blockades us, attacks and hinders our development will hold open much longer the small door through which they give access to those who deny their roots.

We are not going to restrict creation, but this Revolution that has resisted for 60 years, by knowing how to defend ourselves, is not going to leave its

institutional spaces in the hands of those who serve the enemy, be it by denigrating any effort to overcome the economic siege or by benefitting from funds meant to destroy the Revolution. (Applause)

The limits begin where the homeland's symbols and sacred values are disrespected. (Applause)

The Constitution we have just approved, which is being complemented with corresponding laws, has among its first those related to our national symbols.

The naïve do as much damage as the malicious. These are not times to deny ideology, or de-contextualize issues. None of this means denying freedom of creation, or making aesthetic concessions. It means having a sense of the historical moment, knowing that, beyond Cuba, the world is living dangerous, uncertain times, in which the powerful ignore international laws, launch wars based on so-called fake or false news, and destroy ancient civilizations in the name of humanitarian intervention. Constructing and defending a socialist project means defending revolutionary humanism.

As in the times of "Words to intellectuals," the Revolution insists on the right to defend its existence, which is the existence of a people, its creators and intellectuals, as well.

I could say much more to you, but I know there will be more opportunities to do so. We have proposed having monthly meetings with the elected leadership and groups of creators, along with the ministries, to review everything we can collaborate on, to chip away at an ever greater portion of the problems and difficulties. (Applause)

For this, you can count on the support of the government, with six ministers and deputy ministers of Central State Administration present here. The commissions' resolutions provide us with a very broad agenda of issues that we must now address and resolve amongst us all.

Do not let this Congress die. Work to make a reality of all that you understand to contribute to the good of the nation, to its spirituality, to the future that those who wish to deny us have not been able to destroy.

Among you we feel comfortable, enthusiastic, optimistic, conscious of something Raúl taught us: Yes, we can, when we want to. And you, us, that is, the Revolution, want the same thing:

A free, independent, and sovereign country;

True to our history;

That guarantees social justice and fair distribution of wealth;

With respect for the full dignity of human beings, women and men;

With a solid cultural identity;

Where free and universal access to education is preserved;  
That is advancing toward balanced, sustainable economic development;  
Prosperous, inclusive, participatory;  
Not vulnerable militarily, ideologically, socially, or economically;  
With free health services of the highest quality for all;  
Solidary, generous, humanistic;  
That repudiates all forms of discrimination;  
In which organized crime, trafficking in persons, or terrorism can never flourish;  
Defender of the human rights of all, not of exclusive or privileged segments;  
Free from all forms of violence, slavery, human exploitation;  
With the exemplary exercise of people's democracy, not of the antidemocratic power of capital;  
Able to live in peace and develop in harmony with nature and taking care of the resources on which life on the planet depends.

Compañeras and compañeros:

Our recognition for the intense work carried out by Barnet during these years leading UNEAC. We congratulate the new UNEAC leadership, its president-elect, Morlote, with the certainty that they understand that their most important mission is to unleash an irreconcilable battle against uncultured behavior and indecency (Applause), and in that struggle creators should be, as always, as Fidel said in his "Words to intellectuals," more than spectators, actors.

A better world is possible.

This certainty we inherited from our parents and have a duty maintain it for our children.

We are Cuba! We are continuity!

Homeland or death!

Venceremos!

(Ovation)

# **The World Will See What We Are Capable Of Doing And The World Will Join Us In Our Resistance**

**Speech held during the national commemoration in Bayamo (July 26, 2019)**

Dear Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee;

Compañero Machado;

Comandantes de la Revolución;

Compañero Lazo;

Heroic people of Granma: (Applause)

Before the historic generation that accompanies us I will deliver the central remarks at this event, in the same place where the Comandante en Jefe, on the same date in 2006, presided and closed for the last time a National Rebellion Day commemoration.

When the leadership of our Party charged me with speaking here today, I recalled that moment and thought about the significance of this tradition that began 60 years ago. On a journey in the opposite direction of ours, thousands of campesinos on horseback took Havana's José Martí Plaza de la Revolución, with Camilo Cienfuegos in the lead. At least two of them climbed the light poles, as if they were palms, to greet Fidel.

Those guajiros, with their machetes in hand, showed the world the most authentic face of a Revolution of the humble, by the humble, and for the humble.

With that event, July 26 commemorative activities began, a date that hate bloodied and love made a celebration and tribute to the Centenary Generation's youth.

I asked myself how, and in whose name, I should speak today, taking into account that in these acts, traditionally, two speeches are given: one by someone from the province hosting the celebration and one by a historical leader.

Compañero Federico Hernández, first Party secretary in the province spoke in the name of Granma's people. The central remarks of all previous commemorations have always been the responsibility of Fidel, Raúl, Ramiro Valdés, or Machado Ventura.

This may seem like a detail, but it is significant that the protagonists of history, alive, lucid, active in their political leadership delegated to the new generation of leaders in the country the task of presenting the central remarks in one of the most important commemorations in revolutionary history. (Applause)

I am clear that, today, I speak in the name of the grateful, those who face the challenge of driving a country forward – as Miguel Barnet's poem goes – conscious of the extraordinary history we inherited and the commitment to never fail the homeland's heroes, or the people of our birth.

I say this at the beginning, so you understand that, at some moment, as usually happens, the emotion may carry off a word or some significant name.

To Raúl, to Ramiro, and all the combatants who are here with us: Thank you for your confidence, for your example and your legacy. (Applause)

History! What an uncommon weight history has in our lives! It is only right to say so here, where this history was first expressed 151 years ago.

Can anyone who feels and says they are Cuban pass through La Demajagua, through Yara, Manzanillo, Jiguaní, Dos Ríos, La Plata, Guisa, or Bayamo, through their streets, their plazas, without feeling that history is judging us?

Who can cross the Cauto River, climb the hills of the Sierra Maestra, or dip their feet in the water at Las Coloradas without trembling with respect and admiration for the heroism?

Who can read "History will absolve me" and forget Fidel's words explaining why the military base in Bayamo was chosen for one of the assaults? I quote:

"Bayamo was attacked precisely to situate our advance forces on the Cauto River. It can never be forgotten that this province – the reference is to the former province of Oriente – that today has a million and a half inhabitants, is no doubt the most combative and patriotic of Cuba. The province that kept the independence struggle alive for 30 years, and contributed the most blood, sacrifice, and heroism.

The air of that glorious feat still wafts in Oriente, at dawn, when the roosters crow like clarions playing reveille to wake the soldiers, and the sun rises brightly on the steep mountainsides, every day seems that it will be another Yara or Baire."

Thus, to greet you today, I say, the glorious people of Granma.

This province, honored with the name of the boat that brought to Cuban lands 82 of its sons, intent upon being free or martyrs in 1956, is also the cradle of our nationality, our national anthem, of the Revolution began by Céspedes in 1868 and the Rebel Army brought to our days with Fidel at the helm.

"It is no accident, that located in Granma is the second garrison assaulted that morning, the Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, in Bayamo, that today is a museum park bearing the honorable name of Níco López, one of the leaders of the action in this city - Raúl's great friend, in whose office the photo of a boy with big black glasses occupies a place of honor.



Ñico is an inspiration on a day like today in Bayamo. Our children and the children of their children must know the history of this young man, descendant of Galician immigrants, who wasn't from Bayamo, but rather Havana, who was obliged to leave school as a boy and work to help his family; who was one of the organizers of the actions 66 years ago and managed to save his life, fighting in the streets of this city. Who, once back in the capital, sought protection in an embassy and emigrated to Guatemala in the turbulent times of Jacobo Árbenz. There he met Dr. Ernesto Guevara and, the story goes, it was Ñico who gave him the nickname by which he is known around the world: Che.

Ñico was killed just hours after the Granma landing, also in this province's territory, but he has not been absent a minute from the revolutionary work to which he gave himself with such passion and confidence in victory, for which he suffered hunger and hardships of all kinds, without ever losing his enthusiasm or smile.

It is strength that several important institutions, like the refinery in Regla or the Party's advanced studies school, bear his name, not that of the Antonio López, but rather Ñico. In the four letters of this family nickname there is a message of camaraderie, boundless friendship, as one of the Centenary Generation's values.

They were brothers Fidel, Raúl, Almeida, Ramiro, those men and women who put the nation first, who thought of the country as a family.

We came from them, and it is very important that our tributes, annual or daily, not be enclosed within an act, in verses or a few words about dates.

The Revolution now needs us to unleash a great battle for our defense and economy, to defeat the enemy's plan to destroy us and asphyxiate us, and at the same time that we strengthen spirituality in our people, civicism, decency, solidarity, social discipline, and a sense of public service.

Because this is one of the great legacies of our forbearers, those of the Centenary Generation. And because there will be no lasting progress if the social fabric is unraveled morally.

Let us briefly review the events of 66 years ago. The July 26, 1953, actions did not achieve the objectives established by the assailants. The surprise factor was lost, not everyone was able to escape the repression that was violent and cruel.

Men who were photographed alive, like José Luis Tasende, with only his leg wounded, was brutally tortured and later reported as killed in combat.

The oral and graphic testimony that historians and journalists collected over the years is still hard – the most unbearable is imagining Abel's eyes in the hands of his assassins.

"Despite the pain, the physical loss of those beings 'from another world' - from the song "Los elegidos" - the survivors of that epic feat, guided by

Fidel, never complained, or went to a corner to mourn their fallen or murdered companions. They created a movement with a liberatory program that fully maintains its relevance, and turned the events into motivation for other battles: the small motor that drives the larger.

Five years, five months, and five days after the assaults on the garrisons in Santiago de Cuba and Bayamo, denying the alleged failure of 53, the victory of 59 would come. The setback became a victory.

An explanation of the miracle of a group of men defeating one of the best equipped armies on the continent can only be found in the outstanding values of the Centenary Generation, their sense of justice, loyalty to a cause, commitment to their word, confidence in victory, unwavering faith in the people, and unity as a principle.

During the recent discussion of the National Symbols Law, much was said about this strength. Unity has been represented in our shield, since foundational times, by the tight bundle of sticks, rising from the bottom of the back part, like the nation's spinal column.

Our parents and teachers taught us that it is easy to break sticks separately, but impossible to break a bundle tightly united.

When we call for thinking as a country, we are thinking of the physical strength of a bundle of sticks that can be easily broken separately.

It is up to us to think for ourselves, because no one else is going to do it for us.

The giant with the seven-league boots that travels the skies engulfing worlds, has for some time ceased to be a visionary metaphor of Martí's to become a cruel reality of what awaits us, if through ingenuity or ignorance, we underestimate or believe that the plans for the reconquest of Our America - undertaken by the empire with the flag of the Monroe Doctrine on the mast of their pirate ship - are not for us.

Venezuela under siege, robbed, literally assaulted with the approval or complicit silence of other powerful nations, and what is worse, with the shameful collaboration of Latin American governments, is today the most dramatic scene of the cruelty of the decadent empire's policies that combine the work of the world's policeman with that of the supreme court of the global village.

THE OAS, increasingly more discredited and servile, pulls out the red carpet for a military intervention. The Zone of Peace that CELAC approved in Havana to protect the region from the violence of conventional war, barely survives as a result of the will of honorable nations of Latin America and the Caribbean.

And also because of the intelligent, heroic, exemplary resistance of Venezuela's civic-military alliance, its government, and people to the non-

conventional war, with which new methods to subjugate us are being rehearsed every day.

With absolute disregard for what was once the most sacred conquest of the community of nations on the planet: international law, the current U.S. administration lives threatening everyone, even its traditional allies and attacking even its most unconditional servants.

The entire world knows it. The United Nations General Assembly, whose resolutions the U.S. ignores, recognizes this.

We have suffered for 60 years, several generations of Cuban men and women have been prevented from building a nation tailored to our dreams.

And what is the crime for which we are punished?

Our parents had the audacity to end the abuse and recover what had been taken from the nation, over and over again, for centuries. First, the land, bought by Yankee corporations at the ridiculous price of six dollars per hectare, at the end of the long, bloody 30-year war that ended with a pact between the feisty emerging empire and the old decaying metropolis at the crossroads of centuries. The colony was replaced by a neo-colony, by intervention.

Why the Agrarian Reform? This was the question asked in a Survey of Cuba Agricultural Workers conducted by the Catholic University Students Association in 1956-1957, a study we have dusted off in the wake of the Helms-Burton.

"...in the country, especially agricultural workers are living in difficult-to-believe conditions of stagnation, misery, and desperation," the authors of the survey asserted.

One of these, Dr. José Ignacio Lasaga recognized, at the time, that in all of his travels in Europe, the Americas, and Africa, very few times had he seen peasants living as poorly as those in Cuba.

It must be said that working the land did not mean owning it. When those undernourished, illiterate, desperate agricultural workers were asked what they needed most, practically all asked only for work. This right was not even guaranteed six months of the year.

The degree of material and social poverty in the countryside impressed the researchers so much that they stated in their conclusions:

"It is time that our nation cease being the private estate of a few powerful. We have great hope that within a few years, Cuba will not be the property of a few, but truly the homeland of all Cubans..."

The Constitution of 1940, achieved practically through the bloodshed and fire of revolutionaries of the era, proposed land reform, but a law did not arrive until May of 1959.

Until then, our land was the feudal property of U.S. companies in cahoots with corrupt politicians and protected by the armed forces under the command of dictator Fulgencio Batista, who in 1958, had different levels of ownership of nine sugar mills, a bank, three airlines, several radio stations, a television broadcaster, newspapers, magazines, a construction materials factory, a shipyard, a tourist venue, several buildings in urban and rural areas, etc, according to the book

Los propietarios de Cuba 1958.

The investigation states that little more than 500 people owned the country. Most of them fled after the triumph of the Revolution, abandoning their ill-gotten properties obtained via the abuse of power and countless crimes by Batista henchmen and accomplices of the dictator. The Revolution confiscated the properties of these embezzlers. Another story is that of the nationalizations, a right of all sovereign nations recognized in international law - hence its name - in the interest of the public good. A law based on the 1940 Constitution was also approved, which provided for compensation, to be negotiated by Cuba with other governments - as nationalizations are negotiated - but not the United States, which refused to do so, confident that they could regain everything in short order by force. The Agrarian Reform Law was the first major nationalization and the greatest act of social justice demanded by the people. And it was also the breaking point, the crossing of the Rubicon, as Army General Raúl Castro Ruz said.

Those who believe themselves to be the owners of Cuba, refusing to lose her, have since then unleashed an undeclared war that has seen brief pauses, but has never ended.

To confuse public opinion and give this confrontation a legality it does not possess, the Helms-Burton Act was fabricated, a legal invention that combines the empire's desires for dominance over our destinies with the revenge of those nostalgic for the Batista dictatorship.

The current claimants of properties, that 60 years ago finally passed to the hands of the people, come from the immoral and antipatriotic beings who sacked the country.

Incapable of doing so themselves, the thieves of this era, hide today behind a law with absolutely no power in Cuba to recover confiscated property that was obtained through embezzlement or abandoned in fear of popular justice.

Let me warn them that the descendants of that Mambi cavalry and campesinos who took the Plaza in 1959 to greet the victorious Revolution, inherited the land and the machetes of their ancestors, and would not hesitate to wield them sharply against those who attempt to snatch the land the Revolution awarded them. (Applause)

No, we do not understand each other, nor will we ever come to an understanding with those who intend to return Cuba to the state of things

that in 1953 led the best of Cuba's youth to assault military garrisons with more moral authority than weapons.

The Moncada program, brilliantly presented by the young Fidel Castro in his self-defense statement, speaks clearly of the reasons that led to the attack that July 26.

"The problem of the land, the problem of industrialization, the housing problem, the problem of unemployment, the problem of education, the problem of the people's health, I have thus cited the six points, the solutions to which we would have directed our efforts, along with the conquest of public freedoms and political democracy."

"Perhaps this presentation appears cold and theoretical, if one does not know of the frightening tragedy our country is living in terms of these six areas, in addition to the most humiliating political oppression."

Only a Revolution could change the country's panorama, which four years after the assaults had deteriorated so much that, in 1957, a religious organization, as I mentioned, would call for radical, definitive change in the country.

Cuba changed, but not the powerful neighbor's efforts to possess it, with the enthusiastic collaboration of hawks and the servile anti-patriots in South Florida.

They cannot take possession of Cuba, as Maceo warned, and decided to pursue us, corral us, asphyxiate us. This persecution that all our commercial and financial transaction face has escalated these last few years and months to reach new extraterritorial, illegal, and criminal heights.

"I am going to provide a recent figure, for the world's consideration: in this last year alone, from March 2018 through April of 2019, the blockade caused us losses valued at 4.343 billion dollars.

I note that the fact does not reflect the impact produced by the latest measures of the current administration that limit travel licenses, prohibit cruise ship dockings, and reinforce financial restrictions to impact tourism directly and associated activities that benefit the growing non-state sector of the economy.

These restrictions and financial persecution of Cuba are the principal cause of the shortages of foodstuffs and fuel, and difficulties in obtaining replacement parts indispensable to maintenance of the National Electro-energetic System, that has been affected these past few weeks and months, and which we are confronting creatively, with the iron will to resist and triumph.

After six decades of harassment of the simplest Cuba transaction, accumulated losses have reached 922,630,000,000 dollars, taking into account the depreciation of green bills as compared to gold.

The siege is being increasingly tightened around our country, around Venezuela, around Nicaragua, and any other nation that refuses to accept the imperial plan for its destiny.

"Today, before the people of Cuba and the world, we denounce the U.S. administration for beginning to act more aggressively to prevent the delivery of fuel to Cuba.

With these cruel, extraterritorial blockade actions, today they attempt to prevent, by any means, the arrival to Cuban ports of tankers, brutally threatening shipping companies, governments of countries where these ships are registered, and insurance companies.

"The genocidal plan is to increasingly affect the population's quality of life, its progress, and even its hopes, with the objective of hurting Cuban families in daily life, in their basic needs, and accuse the Cuban government of being ineffective. They are seeking a social explosion.

"How little they know us! When will they finally understand that the heroic Cuban family is capable of facing, and resisting with dignity, the worse siege, and continue loving each other, despite distances, because nothing, no one, can divide us?

(Applause)

They want to cut off the lights, the water, and even the air to extract political concessions from us. They don't even attempt to hide it. They publicly announce funding for subversion in Cuba, invent false, hypocritical pretexts to add us to their spurious lists and justify the tightening of the blockade.

In utter cynicism, they resort to blackmail.

Ignorant of history and the Cuban Revolution's foreign policy principles, they propose to negotiate a possible reconciliation with us, in exchange for abandoning the course chosen and defended by our people. They suggest betraying friends, throwing 60 years of dignity into the trash bin."No, imperialist gentlemen, we do not understand each other.

(Applause)

Cuba, which knows the ethical and political distance between this U.S. administration and the noblest citizens of that country, has not renounced its stated goal of building a civilized relationship with the United States, but it must be based on mutual respect for our deep differences."Any proposal that departs from respect among equals does not interest us.

(Applause)

And as for the U.S. people, they are always welcome in Cuba. Our doors are open. Come, see, and get to know the reality of the country you are not allowed to visit, in the name of freedom, an essential human right that, they say, is lacking in Cuba and abounds there.

For our part, we will not allow ourselves to be distracted by pressure or threats. There are too many challenges to overcome and we are going to concentrate on these. In the very first place, on the economic and military invulnerability of the country, legal ordering, the removal of any internal or external obstacle that persists - be it bureaucracy, insensibility, or corruption, which are unacceptable in socialism.

And for imperialism, "not even a tiny bit," as Che said, and a permanent lesson of the Revolution. (Applause)

We will take these messages of Cuba's unwavering political principles to the Sao Paulo Forum in Caracas this week, to strengthen the integration of left forces and their mobilization against the imperial offensive intended to break us, divide us, and confront us.

Dear compatriots:

What we have found during our tours of this province and heard in the speech by your first secretary, Federico Hernández, are important economic and social gains. The province deserves to host this event, given its undeniable advances. (Applause)

I emphasize principally that 80% of arable land is under cultivation, and the progress made at agricultural poles in municipal self-sufficiency, given the contribution they can make to replacing imports in lines like rice, a basic food in the Cuban family's diet, But - there are always buts - authorities in the territory recognize that, even with the reaching of important records in production, you are far from your potential.

This is a common reality throughout the country, in which the battle for development is an intense, tiring race with obstacles of all kinds. The first and determinant one being the U.S. blockade; and the second, is the existence of practices that are incompatible with socialism, which we have noted in comments before economists, intellectuals and artists, and the National Assembly.

I will not tire of insisting on the duty to think as a country, of banishing self-interest, vanity, indifference, shoddy work, and the "It can't be done."

Let us stop believing and stating that the blame is someone else's, without looking first at what each one of us is doing, creating, and contributing.

Considering the panorama of brutal persecution of our financial operations that I described previously, we all have the duty to care for the costly investments in transportation, industry, communications, and other areas that are underway, as "the apples of our eyes."

To pretend that mentalities are transformed all at once, at the maximum speed of our trains, may sound like a utopian dream, if we did not believe in the people and their moral reserves, and aspirations for growth with beauty.

But these changes will not be pulled from a hat. We are not magicians.

Our Council of Ministers does not work with illusions. It is up to us to direct, and direct well, the scarce resources available to guarantee the equitable and fair distribution of goods produced.

We are promoting efficient and competitive national production; exports and the replacement of imports; foreign investment; productive chains; the use of science, technology, and our university's talent to innovate; electronic government; and communication as a fundamental element in the battle to eliminate obstacles and tackle a piece, everyday, as big as possible, of the problems.

A level of response can be noted that is exciting, but it is not enough. Circumstances force us today, as they have always forced us, to insist on a rate of progress that is beyond our goals, to demand, to control, to banish routine and determine with facts whether the formula we used yesterday is effective, or must be updated.

In a timely fashion, we must strongly sanction those who do not understand that defending the country today means caring for and protecting scarce material resources.

If the government is dedicated to improving the lives of our citizens, the government and citizens must prevent abuse, dirtying, or neglect of what cost so much to acquire. Given the old dilemma of raising wages and expecting productive results to cover these expenditures, we decided to raise them. Not once, but several times the amount previously paid. Nor will we wait until the end of the year to begin application of this measure, as popular and dependent it is on what we are all capable of doing that translates into growth. But, in order to sustain this and all possible social benefits, it is necessary to produce more and increase the quality of services. New measures, proposed by the people, should be approved in the coming weeks and months.

"Going for more is not a slogan. It is a translation of the government's language in response to the enemy's policy: With those who want to steal our land, our homes, our schools, hospitals, childcare centers, beaches, ports, and airports... there can be no understanding!

It is the concrete expression in practice of our will not to be distracted by pressure or threats, and resist creatively without giving up on development." "The hard years imposed by imperialism's seige cannot hide truths like fists under a cloak of disgrace," wrote the beloved intellectual Graziella Pogolotti in his most recent article, where she also reminds us, "Because the struggle is not over, it is always the 26th." (Applause) Yes, July 26th will always be a great inspiration. And thinking as a country, I want to take up again a slogan from my years of work in the provinces, when we called upon the people, motivated by the significance of this date:

Let us all work to make every day in the almanac a 26th; every month in the year, a July; and every commitment a victorious Moncada!



The world will see what we are capable of doing, and the world will join us in our resistance. It is time to make a new and urgent call to conscience.

We can start or finish this appeal, with some verses by someone who always said yes to the Revolution: Roberto Fernández Retamar, essayist and poet, a giant intellectual who has just left us. Let us explain with his beautiful words what we are, and what we are doing, despite the fires and the fences. In his poem "A quien pueda interesar," Roberto wrote: Throughout the entire Island, we are fewer than those who daily wander a big city. We are fewer: a handful of men on a strip of land whipped by the sea. But we have built a forgotten joy.

For this happiness we continue building: We're going for more! Because we are all Cuba! We are continuity!

Homeland or Death!

Venceremos!

(Ovation)

# **Speech To The Venezuelan People**

## **Speech held at the Sao Paulo forum in Caracas (July 28, 2019)**

Compañero Nicolás Maduro Moros, brother President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela;

Compañeras and compañeros of the Bolivarian Revolutions leadership;

Compañera Mónica Valente;

Latin American and Caribbean leaders, and those from other parts of the world joining us;

Compañeras and compañeros:

Allow me to devote my first words to Comandante Hugo Chávez Frías, Cuba's great friend, son of the Americas who today turns 65 in eternity. (Applause)

Our Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro, who loved him dearly and was one of the first to recognize his qualities as a leader, referring to the appearance of an extraordinary politician like Chávez in our suffering region, placed him next to Bolívar and Martí in the battle for the destiny of the Greater Homeland. Fidel said:

"For a long time now I have held [...] the deepest conviction that, when the crisis comes, leaders emerge. This is how Bolívar emerged when the occupation of Spain by Napoleon occurred and a foreign king was imposed, creating the conditions conducive to the independence of the Spanish colonies in this hemisphere. This is how Martí emerged, when the auspicious hour arrived for the outbreak of the independence revolution in Cuba. This is how Chavez emerged, when the terrible social and human situation in Venezuela and Latin America determined that the time to fight for our second and true independence had arrived."

Bolívar, Martí, Fidel, Chávez, what do these men have in common, who, whenever we are called upon to think, we feel obliged to quote and draw from their respective legacies? Our America, Martí would answer, who named it this way to clearly distinguish ours from imperial America that despised us and who despises us more now, as evidenced by the huge wall projected on the southern border, the atrocious mistreatment of migrants, the Helms -Burton, the Nica Act, financial persecution and the arbitrary imposition of tariffs on countries in the region, the suspension of development aid, the blockade and the dirty war against Cuba and Venezuela, among other malicious acts that know no limits.

But even this evil is dwarfed when our America meets, that is, the diverse, plural, contributing world of Latin American and Caribbean progressive party leaders and social activists, who in the dark years of the 1990s created this unitary space for the left, alive and taking action.

Thus, Bolívar's dream seems closer when he said, "I wish more than anyone else to see the world's largest nation formed in Latin America, less for its size and wealth, than for its freedom and glory."

The Liberator left us another fundamental idea, and I again quote him, "Unity can do it all, and therefore, we must preserve this precious principle."

José Martí, who had the Liberator as an inspiration and guide, was the great architect and constructor of the unity that was missing in the Cuban struggle for independence. Although he died without seeing the victory, in his last, unfinished letter, he passionately defended the idea of "stopping in time, with the independence of Cuba, that the United States extends itself through the Antilles, and falls with greater force upon our lands of America."

Fidel and Chávez drew from both Bolívar and Martí the ideas of our revolutions: Unity and integration were their great obsessions and must also be ours. (Applause)

I know that these are also the obsessions of the Sao Paulo Forum, born of the need for unity and articulation of political parties and popular movements of the left in our region, to confront imperialism and the neoliberal right, very agile in coordinating action to destroy everything we might create in favor of real democracy and social justice, via anti-democratic methods, coups, criminalization of progressive leaders, fraud, and manipulation of the facts.

The Consensus of Our America, and all the documents that have emerged from the Sao Paulo Forum are evidence of these concerns. The evaluation of scenarios, criticism and self-criticism, key to progress, have impacted the greater dynamism of the Forum over the last few years, in the face of the expanding neoliberal offensive and major imperial attacks.

Compañeras and compañeros:

July includes singular historical coincidences that we share. Simón Bolívar, Liberator of America, was born this month (Applause) ; Venezuela's declaration of independence was signed this month (Applause); this is the month in which the generation of José Martí's centenary, led by Fidel Castro, assaulted garrisons in Santiago de Cuba and Bayamo to re-initiate the Cuba Revolution. (Applause) It is the month in which the Sandanista Revolution triumphed, with its 40th anniversary just celebrated (Applause). And it is the month in which, on a day like today, Hugo Chávez was born. (Applause and shouts of, "Chávez lives, the struggle continues," "Chávez did not die," and "Chávez has become millions, Chávez is back!")

The São Paulo Forum summons us during an extremely challenging July and here we are, to accompany the heroic Venezuelan resistance and demand an end to the brutal siege that has been imposed on the country. Venezuela is today the anti-imperialist struggle's primary trench

(Applause). The Forum summons us to condemn the blockade of Cuba and demand that it be lifted. (Applause)

The Forum calls us to support the rebellion the Puerto Rican people, which has not been buried after more than 100 years of Yankee colonialism. (Applause) It also unites us to reject the empire's scandalous actions against the families of migrants and particularly boys and girls, mistreated, abused, practically caged, thus denying human beings their dignity and most elemental rights.

With these new provocations added to the accumulated indignation, the Sao Paulo Forum is called upon to play a greater leading role in the complex current political scenario. Even more so considering the attacks on progressive processes in countries where the left had conquered positions of power, through which changes and notable social advances were pushed forward.

The counter-offensive of Yankee imperialism and the oligarchy, with hawks having literally taken possession of U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America and the Caribbean, is dangerously impacting the geographical area declared by CELAC as a Zone of Peace.

The peoples are ashamed of the sell-out politicians, of those the empire uses at its convenience, and later casts aside with disdain.

Also impacting this context are the setbacks suffered by progressive forces in some countries, and what's worse, the division that persists among them, fragmenting, weakening the stated will to act together. Lacking strategic political programs, and distanced from social movements, there are left formulas that have removed themselves as alternatives.

The experience of the Cuban Revolution is based on the early recognition of the strategic role of unity around the fundamental objectives of social justice, in tight alliance with the people, their needs and problems, to which its victorious resistance is due.

We believe that it is our responsibility to give and take experiences, without risking a repeat of carbon copy errors that have been so costly in previous historical periods.

Precisely to save hopes and dreams, following the collapse of the European socialist experience, this forum of articulation for progressive forces was created by Fidel and Lula, to base its action on what unites us, and not what separates us. (Applause)

The two leaders left us a valuable instrument for joint action and unity within diversity. Fidel is not physically present, but his extraordinary work has survived him and we can draw upon it limitlessly.

Lula, imprisoned on the basis of false charges and scandalous judicial trickery, is the example of how far the enemies of the left will go – the greatest expression of the fear imperialism and oligarchies have of the left

in power. They'll do anything to prevent the return of Lula to the Presidency of a country that only with the PT was able to redistribute the nation's enormous wealth to the degree possible.

Today Lula's freedom is also one of the great challenges of the left in the region. (Applause) The mobilizations cannot cease. One of our founders remains unjustly imprisoned and we must put an end to this abuse. (Applause and shouts of "Free Lula!")

The Forum is the precious legacy of our leaders and a viable mechanism to resist the attacks of those who would like to implode our very valuable alliance.

Let us not forget for a moment that we are in besieged Caracas, in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, attacked and besieged a thousand times.

We walked the streets of Caracas yesterday, in defense of the heroic Bolivarian Revolution, leaders, and social activists from the five continents alongside the legitimate representatives of the Venezuelan people. (Applause) That march was not recorded or disseminated by the many cameras of corporate television broadcasters that have led the planet to believe that the Venezuelan state has no power or followers in this land.

Let us reaffirm before the world our support and solidarity with legitimate President Nicolás Maduro Moros and the military civic union that has defeated the worst plans of the enemy so many times. (Applause and shouts)

We must remember that ensuring peace in Venezuela is equivalent to defending peace for the entire region.

To support and defend Venezuela is to decisively confront the return of the Monroe Doctrine and the imperialist escalation against our peoples. Today it is wielded against Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua; tomorrow will be against others, and in the end they will go for everyone.

The United States threatens and slanders Cuba and Venezuela, not recognizing their failure in attempting to overthrow the Bolivarian Revolution and misrepresenting the altruistic cooperation that our country offers here and in more than 80 nations. There is no better platform than this Forum to reaffirm that Cuba will never renounce or betray its principles or Venezuela (Applause and shouts of "Cuba and Venezuela, a single flag")

I reiterate here what I said this last July 26 in Bayamo, just a few days ago:

"The siege is being increasingly tightened around our country, around Venezuela, around Nicaragua, and any other nation that refuses to accept the imperial plan for its destiny.

"...the U.S. administration for beginning to act more aggressively to prevent the delivery of fuel to Cuba...

"They want to cut off the lights, the water, and even the air to extract political concessions from us. They don't even attempt to hide it. They publicly announce funding for subversion in Cuba, invent false, hypocritical pretexts to add us to their spurious lists and justify the tightening of the blockade.

"In utter cynicism, they resort to blackmail.

"Ignorant of history and the Cuban Revolution's foreign policy principles, they propose to negotiate a possible reconciliation with us, in exchange for abandoning the course chosen and defended by our people. They suggest betraying friends, throwing 60 years of dignity into the trash bin.

"No, imperialist gentlemen, we do not understand each other."

(Applause and shouts of "Homeland or Death," "Cuba yes, Yankees no!")

Political parties and popular movements:

Less than a week ago, representatives of a small group of countries in this region insulted the Sao Paulo Forum, to them we say that the Forum is here, and will be, and has much to do because it is again "the Hour of the Furnaces in which nothing more than the light must be seen." That light is unity, the great legacy left by our heroes, from Bolívar to Martí, Fidel and Chávez (Applause).

The reaction of that spineless right to the Sao Paulo Forum meeting is insulting and very cynical; they have invented all kinds of legends and insults. They, the kings of conspiracy, accuse Forum participants of what they practice every day against our peoples. It must pain them very much that these leaders of the left around the entire world - defamed, persecuted, gagged, with so many companions murdered and disappeared - dare to challenge the imperial mandate to stay quiet and be afraid.

There are no mysteries or conspiracies, no plans of aggression or intervention, nor have there ever been in the almost 30 years of the Sao Paulo Forum. Imperialism is the expert in that, as are national oligarchies, so fearful of their people, they invent false charges to imprison popular leaders through spurious legal processes.

No one hides coming to this event to promote peace, sovereignty and prosperity for our peoples, because there is no nobler work that demands more sacrifice than the battle for the ideals that have always moved the left of the world.

As those attending the Forum have documented and discussed, it is necessary to articulate resistance to neoliberalism and imperialism in our respective communication strategies: create and nurture networks of truth against the offensive of lies.

New generations interact in a natural and dynamic way in these arenas, which our adversaries today control and use to advance their perverse intentions.

On the 65th birthday of Chávez, that extraordinary communicator who emerged from the heart of Bolívar's homeland to bring us back the words and dreams of the Liberator, there can be no better tribute to his living memory than a progressive movement of the left, democratic and diverse as the parties and social groups that compose it, unleashing the unlimited creativity of the people to write their own recounting of history, and make history itself in the common struggle for justice.

Happy birthday, Comandante! (Applause)

The peoples of Latin America and the world have come to celebrate your birth where your remains rest. Your powerful revolutionary ideal is more alive than ever in your beloved homeland and in every corner of the world reached by your passionate words. (Applause)

"For Peace, Sovereignty, and Prosperity of the peoples ... Unity, Struggle, Battle and Victory," are the slogans of this event, the 25th since the Forum was founded. The challenge is to finally make a reality of this beautiful alliance of forces.

Every time we advance a stretch, no matter small it may seem, in the conquest of our development projects in Cuba, we say: We're going for more!

The same feeling encourages us to value the potential of this magnificent force that we are, acting united and articulated. Let us always march for more!

Always onward to victory! (Shouts of "Venceremos!")

(Ovation)

## **Facing Difficult Conjecture Without Fear**

**Article written in response to the energy shortages (October 4, 2019)**

"Men come in two bands: those who love and create, and those who hate and destroy. And the world's battle is that of the Hindu duality: good vs evil."

Who has not recalled this phrase of Martí's during these challenging days as the adversary tightens the siege with renewed hope of bringing us to our knees, and Cuba's best step forward to confront the situation, while others profit from the discontent and shortages?

The first, the visible, powerful majority, are raising the nation's self-esteem and providing more energy than a hundred oil tankers.

I have seen them on our tours of the country. Men and women, young people, children and the elderly, who follow the news, analyze the contexts, condemn abuse, and offer their ideas, effort, and even jokes, to face the clearly difficult moment that the arrogant, abusive empire imposes on us, tightening the screw.

They are on the side of those who love and create. Thinking of them, we have called for thinking as a country, with the conviction that the capacity of collective intelligence is inexhaustible.

We have called for thinking differently, being proactive, finding the potential within the times we are living, which are qualitatively different, as are human beings, compared to other periods, not only because the years have passed, but because during this time the world and the country have changed, and Cubans along with them.

When we call for recovering experiences from the most difficult years, to dust off savings and efficiency practices used during the Special Period, we do so thinking about everything that collective intelligence contributed at that time, and that we mistakenly discarded, as soon as the worst moments passed.

We are convinced that this search for solutions must take into account the new contexts, technological advances, the contributions of knowledge in one of the most dynamic periods of human civilization, and not only in terms of how we have advanced as a species, but also as to what we have lost, under the consumerist, predatory drive of the capitalist system.

We are not afraid of words, as we are not afraid of the challenge. Everything changes, except principles: first of all, the decision to preserve national sovereignty and independence and to defend socialism, social justice, solidarity and internationalism, to which we owe our very existence as a nation.



Something else that has not changed is the empire's obsession with punishing "Cuba's bad example."

Perhaps that is why some have questioned our use of the term "conjunctural" to describe the energy situation. Given the uncertain conditions in which the international fuel market operates and under the blockade's toxic financial persecution Cuba faces, "conjunctural" may suggest excessive optimism, but not setting a time limit on the situation would have been unnecessarily pessimistic and irresponsible.

What we could absolutely not do was to remain silent, in the face of a situation imposed by an escalation of the empire's hostility toward Cuba, in response to our solidarity with Venezuela.

What we were obliged to do, and could do, was to provide information, in a complete and transparent way, on our plan against the enemy's plan. A serious, responsible government has this duty to its people.

The situation has been addressed to date without resorting to scheduled power outages. The band of those who love and create has made this possible.

The other band, those who hate, try to undo what we do, enraged by the popular response, they complain that the ships have not arrived, that lights have been turned off, that the siege is being tightened, because independent, dignified Cuba does not bow down or die. They are happy every time another measure is adopted to reinforce the blockade. They dream of an invasion of Cuba.

Like the biblical Cain, there are people who write, talk, and shriek on social media, for a few coins from the multi-million dollar war chest for subversion in Cuba. Every minute of our resistance allows them to sell themselves.

There is no higher price than capitulating to the enemy, which, with no reason or right, assaults you, Fidel wrote. What a valuable phrase! As is Almeida's, with which we began and sustain this battle - be the attack short-lived or permanent: "No one here is surrendering." The people will have the last word.

# **No One Is Going To Take From Us The Confidence In The Future We Owe Our Children**

## **Inaugural speech at the National Assembly of People's Power (October 10, 2019)**

Dear Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee;

Dear comrades of the historic generation;

Compañero Esteban Lazo, President of the National Assembly of People's Power and the Council of State; members of the Council of State;

Deputies;

People of Cuba:

Today is October 10 and we Cubans must congratulate each other. "...the first day of Cuba's freedom and independence," as Carlos Manuel de Céspedes said, is by all rights one of the most celebrated on our national calendar, given its powerful resonances, from that minute in 1868 until this one, as we have reaffirmed our oath of unconditional service to the homeland.

Although the nation would later go on to experience legendary episodes, the first inspiration came from that day, when the shackles were broken and the flag made by a woman waved in new hands.

Together embracing an ideal, for the first time, blacks and whites, women and men, almost all young people, and as the protagonists, the youngest Cubans. This was the first October 10, full of transcendental meaning.

They say that a 20-year-old boy named Emilio Tamayo was the first to wave the flag made by Cambula, in the camp erected at La Demajagua. And that the Father of the Homeland said, as he admired it unfolding, "Die before you see her dishonored." It is also said that the plantation's bell was rung by another very young man from Bayamo, Manuel García Pavón, who would be the last survivor of the historic uprising.

What do I intend by evoking these memories? In the first place, of course, to pay due tribute to history and its eternal links with the present, challenging and full of threats and risks, like that first day at La Demajagua, and every day in Cuba's 151 years of struggle to maintain our independence.

I am especially interested today in highlighting the episodes that place Cuban youth at the center of these struggles for something that, almost a century after October 10, 1868, in July 1962, in Santiago de Cuba, Fidel told students and professors at the University of Oriente:

"The Revolution is not a struggle for the present, the Revolution is a struggle for the future; the Revolution always has its sights set on the

future and the homeland of which we are thinking, the society we conceive as a just society, worthy of men, the homeland of tomorrow..."

The Revolution is a struggle for the future. It has always been and is now.

For the Council of State, its President, Vice President, and the remaining 19 members who have just been reelected or elected this October 10; for the Vice President of the Republic and for its President, the number one task must be the future. We appreciate your confidence in choosing us for these responsibilities, which, united together, we will perform in the name of this future.

That is why we have put defense and the economy in the first place and at the same level. We have not forgotten, for a second, that a Revolution is worth defending and those who forget this lesson do not live to talk about it. The economy, as the basis and sustenance of the social superstructure, is the great determinant of the future.

Recently on the Presidency's website, we made the call to "Think as a country," and after carefully reading the more than 1,200 responses, we found a great deal of optimism and confidence in the future, although also, in some cases, expressions of concern.

Logical and revolutionary concern that we share, facing a world crippled by imbalanced economic relations, without "buffers" in less developed nations, and in which global financial institutions have made a practice of bailing out banks, but never peoples.

A world dominated by disrespect for international legality, led by a hegemonic power and the imposition of its demands through threats and sanctions.

A world manipulated by pernicious media campaigns against a solidary and peaceful nation like Venezuela, while insisting on legitimizing as "President" an imposter without any popular support.

A world in which the podium of the United Nations General Assembly has been used to dismiss, belittle, threaten, and deny social systems and sovereign governments and lie shamelessly in an attempt to promote interventions of all kinds, including military.

A world in which global agreements, cooperation projects, and health programs, that brought hope to excluded majorities, are broken.

A world in which the judiciary is used to imprison progressive leaders and persecute and murder social activists with impunity.

A world in which those who build walls, separate families, imprison migrant children, prohibit exchanges between peoples, and block access to development of other nations, putting the human species in danger when they ignore climate change and dismiss scientific warnings, while the Amazon and other lungs of the planet burn.

Such a world really alarms us all. At the First Earth Summit, in 1992, Fidel delivered his jarring speech warning of "an endangered species."

Thus no one should be surprised that a teenager cries in front of those responsible for the disaster. The tears of Greta Thunberg are the tears of the future.

"To govern is to foresee," Martí said. And the Cuban Revolution owes much to the brilliant foresight of Fidel and Raúl. This is our political school.

Those who doubt it, can just look at 60 years of revolutionary history: beginning with the literacy campaign and education of our people, the basis for forging the valuable human capital that distinguishes us, and promoting the development of science and medicine to international cutting-edge levels, even the early warnings and preparations that have now allowed us to confront the brutal tightening of the blockade by this U.S. administration, with less damage than our adversaries had calculated.

The commitment we make before you today is to maintain and strengthen this practice, take advantage of the invaluable human capital that we have trained and the contributions of academia and science to increase the efficiency of government management, as a result of the foresight generated by knowledge.

The country has the commitment to nurture the talent developed by the Revolution, produce and contribute internally without closing the door to cooperation and learning beyond our borders. The export of Cuban products and services must be expanded and diversified.

When we decide to increase salaries in the budgeted sector, three to five times over; when we promote accelerated computerization of society; when, despite the limitations imposed by the blockade, we defend the strengthening of education and ties between universities and production at all levels, we are working for the future.

This year and, in particular, the last few months have tested our ability to resist without foregoing development. And more has been demanded from the people, but also from ministers and state administration cadres. The requirements of the days and months to come will be no less demanding. Under the conditions of a prolonged and total blockade, it is up to us to combine efforts and support each other in existing structures and the new responsibilities we have acquired.

The Council of State, for example, will function more regularly and with greater impact between sessions of the Assembly. There are many laws, essential to improving government efficiency, which require more expedited ways to review, approve, and implement. This is a commitment we made upon approving the new Constitution.

Municipalities must learn to manage available resources with greater authority, but with greater responsibility, as well.

We are already at the gates of 2020, during which we intend to continue consolidating our economy. Without ever giving up our greatest dreams, which by elementary logic require more resources, we will strengthen areas of work and programs that during 2019 we proposed as priorities, including exports, foreign investment, housing construction, food production, tourism, transportation, and renewable energy.

As we have stated on previous occasions, after the fuel shortage, generated by the intransigence of the United States government, the country will return to normal, but it will not be with the same ways of working. If something good has come from these days of tension, it is that Cuba's enormous potential for greater efficiency was brought to the fore.

That is why we will place greater emphasis on reducing expenses and saving more; on generalizing the useful solutions that emerged during the toughest years of the Special Period, adjusted to our reality, that is, taking into account technological advances and greater knowledge that can make a working principle, such as conservation, an engine of development.

We insist on the need to work for the good of all, on the political and ideological preparation of cadres, on the involvement of young people who always give us so much energy, and in the participation of the people, in the search for the best solutions, with the certainty that collective intelligence is inexhaustible, as well as the potential of resistance and creativity that the hostility of the adversary always awakens in Cubans.

I said, about a year ago, when I assumed the tasks of the Presidency of what was at that time the Councils of State and Ministers: We did not come to make promises. We come to fulfill the mandate of the revolutionary people.

Today a new stage of work begins for those of us who represent the state and government, which will demand from every leader, cadre, and official at all levels, the willingness to set aside the heavy burden of obsolete practices and cumbersome mechanisms, which delay processes and weaken national self-esteem.

The times in which we live are new, in many ways, and demand different thinking. Change everything that needs to be changed, as Fidel told us, as Raúl showed us during his years at the helm of the Presidency and as our first Party secretary.

When I think of them, I am also thinking about the future, because their generation was a generation of the future, leaving home, studies, and comfort to change this land once and for all. Their hands did not tremble when fighting the worst scourges that sucked the blood of the Republic, or challenging the threatening enemy by raising a new nation from the roots, from the scrub, from the Sierra.

Just as they did not tremble when it came to facing a dirty war that lasted for years, with mercenaries destroying and killing practically all over the

island, they did not hesitate to give support to sister peoples who fought against hateful Latin American dictatorships, sustained and supported by the same empire that now labels progressive leaders of the region as dictators.

Of course, this is making the empire look bad, old and demoralized, with its troop of mediocre and duplicitous politicians pulled together in the OAS.

Where are those who continue giving advice on the fate of Venezuela and at the same time take no responsibility for the enormous conflicts and social problems that afflict their peoples? How do you intend to cover up their bungling conspiracies with paramilitary mafias, with their hostility against Venezuela?

If something was never lost on the leadership of the Cuban Revolution, it was the role of morality in history. There they are, undefeated, with no other monument than their own work, to which we have the duty to pay the most just tribute: ensure that it grows and prospers, without fear of threats or danger.

The poor of the earth cannot lose their dignity or give in to threats. This is a conviction made evident many times throughout history, from October 10 in La Demajagua until April 1961, when Fidel on mercenary ships fired from a tank.

In these times, when we have returned to join Comandante Almeida in his cry of principles at the toughest moment, we firmly insist that the Cuban Revolution will preserve intact all our convictions, those that cost the blood of the country's best sons and daughters. (Applause)

When you have a people of such traditions, like the Cuban, you do not doubt for a second to face the future, aware that you will triumph. Today we repeat the expression we have often heard from the Army General, and that we have learned to value in hard times: What a people we have! (Applause)

Those who create and construct have defeated those who hate and destroy.

The blood of our noble indigenous people, our European, African and Asian grandparents, and that of all men and women of immense courage, who over the centuries created our national being, seethes with rebellion in the face of every threat, and with rage upon every aggression.

The more they attack us, the more they try to intimidate us, the more our national will and strength grows: Unity! (Applause)

October 10 will always inspire us! Like the Mambises, an honorable name for our Creole rebels, we will not hesitate to use a machete if there are no guns. And we will always have dignity as our banner and moral shield.

This people, which has more than once, been the capital of world solidarity, welcoming those who offer it to us and offering it around the world to those who need it most, is now awaiting in Havana, for its 500th anniversary, the

arrival of a supportive, anti-imperialist wave, like a cannon shot against the blows of the imperial beast.

In the land of Céspedes, Mariana, Gómez, Maceo, Martí, Mella, Guiteras, Rubén, Camilo, Che, Almeida, Ramiro, Guillermo, Vilma, Celia, Haydée, Melba, in the land of Raúl and Fidel, the Bronze Titan's warning has not changed a millimeter: "Whoever attempts to take Cuba will collect only the dust from its blood-soaked soil, if he does not perish in the fight."  
(Applause)

Compañeras and compañeros:

Intense and challenging days await us, but no one is going to take from us the confidence in the future which we owe our children, in the homeland our parents won by standing firm.

Long live free Cuba! (Shouts of: Viva!)

Socialism or death!

Country or Death!

Venceremos!

(Ovation)

# **There Is A Historically Postponed World Waiting For Our Agreement And Action**

**Speech at the 18<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (October 25, 2019)**

Dear President Ilham Aliyev,

Distinguished heads of state and government,

Delegates and guests:

With sincere emotion, I am grateful for the warm welcome given us by the people and government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, with whom we are joined by 27 years of uninterrupted relations. It has been a long but essential journey.

We reached the beautiful, prosperous Baku, after traveling more than 11,300 kilometers, breaking the blockade's barriers - which in recent months have been brutally reinforced - because the current serious challenges require us to retake the role required of the Non-Aligned Movement in the international arena, as the organization that represents the majority of the planet.

Again, as in 1961, it is crucial that we work together, upholding the founding principles of Bandung, for peace and development of our peoples. Because it is our responsibility as political leaders, and because no one else will do it for us.

Before the open contempt for the just demands of the nations of the South by the United States and other governments; in the face of obscene politicization of human rights and flagrant disrespect for the right of peoples to choose their own political, socio-economic, and cultural systems; in the absence of a commitment to multilateralism and international treaties, others may be indifferent. We are not. Because all these actions are directed against our peoples.

The nations which, with their blood, their sweat, and their suffering have paid the highest price for progress, emerging from colonial exploitation and plunder, from centuries of economic and social relegation, have every right to ask:

Why do military expenditures continue to increase irrationally, while investments for development and cooperation are cut?

Why underestimate the seriousness of climate change that has endangered the existence of small island states and the survival of humanity itself?

Why are weapons not silenced and the most backward and impoverished nations compensated for their looting with fair, special, differentiated treatment?

Your Excellencies:



Cuba is honored to have been the first Latin American country in the Non-Aligned Movement. This grouping of free nations that operates under democratic rules and without veto, is what we defend and dream of seeing one day at the UN. Given the strength of these values, we reiterate here:

Our solidarity with all peoples struggling for the recognition of their right to self-determination.

Our condemnation of unilateral decisions by the United States in support of Israel and against Iran, which increase instability in the volatile region of the Middle East.

Our call to end the war against the Syrian people and to find a comprehensive, fair, lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Our welcome to the process of rapprochement and inter-Korean dialogue and our condemnation of unilateral sanctions against the DPRK.

Our energetic rejection of U.S. campaigns against political forces, left leaders, and progressive governments in Latin America and the Caribbean

Our firm solidarity with the constitutional President of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, the Chavista Bolivarian Revolution and the civic-military union of the people, who have managed to defend the country's sovereignty against great threats and dangers.

We also reaffirm our support and solidarity with the Nicaraguan government in the face of U.S. attempts to destabilize this sister nation.

Our congratulations to the people of the Plurinational State of Bolivia for their active participation in the electoral process and to President Evo Morales Ayma for his re-election.

We denounce the attempted coup and campaign of misinformation, destabilization, and violence unleashed by sectors of the opposition and instigated by the United States against peace and citizen security in Bolivia. The Bolivia of native peoples, vilified for centuries, which was placed by its extraordinary leader among the countries, with the greatest growth and reserves in our region

And, in particular, given the serious dangers it entails for our region and for the world, we reject the decision to activate the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (TIAR), aimed at militarily supporting the U.S. desire to revive the Monroe Doctrine, in an irrational effort to "Make America Great, at the price of recovering the continent's free nations as their backyard.

Dear leaders present here:

During the Cold War they called us the Third World. It was assumed that by not belonging to one bloc or another, we would be free from war. But our people know, because we took the deaths and the losses, since, if the weapons ever cooled, it was only among the powerful.

There is practically no nation in Africa, Asia, or Latin America, which has not suffered the painful cost of war, of liberation or intervention, of low, medium, or high intensity, during the second half of the 20th century, to this day.

Even where there was no death and destruction, there were high costs, when the prices of what we bought skyrocketed and the price of what we sold fell; when the dictatorship of the dollar and abusive financial institutions born of the so-called Bretton Woods agreement were imposed, that great scam to ensure that the world revolved around the vicissitudes of imperial politics.

The powerful, from their comfortable armored spaces, have made our countries laboratories and marketed their weapons, leaving us with millions dead, displaced, homeless, hungry, victims of violence.

They dictate rules of universal conduct that they constantly violate, and draw up lists to exclude us or punish us, if we do not submit to the blind laws of the market and imperial hegemony.

World War III is not the next war. There is a war underway with no beginning date or estimated conclusion, which for years has bled noble and peaceful nations, with weapons of imperial armies, mercenary soldiers, and terrorists disguised as liberators, in the name of the fight against terrorism, the defense of democracy, freedom, or human rights. Lies!

More lies than ever before told, with greater disdain and a more terrible cost to the vast majority of humanity, in the interest of a minority that has taken their luxuries to mind-boggling excesses.

In the 21st century, threats and aggressions of varying degrees are launched against all sovereign governments that refuse to serve the hegemonic power as sites for military bases, hand over resources, or yield to their mandates.

There is heroic Venezuela, for decades looted of its almost infinite energy reserves, until the Bolivarian Revolution recovered them, to put them at the service of its people, and regional and international solidarity and cooperation.

Against a Venezuela that resists, wielded are the most perverse accusations, psychological warfare techniques, and destabilization plots, in a thousand-times-failed attempt to provoke an internal conflict.

Displaying the worse infamy and cynicism, the empire accuses the Bolivarian government of being an instrument of Cuba.

As they do not practice or understand solidarity, blinded by maliciousness and impotence, they accuse our health workers of being disguised military personnel, pursue and block trade between our nations, affecting the vitality of our economies.

They break agreements, and unleash commercial, electronic, and media wars. They close doors, erect walls, confiscate assets, steal funds, prohibit exchanges. They ignore and violate international law. They promise to make America great - their America, not ours - at the cost of reducing what is available for the rest of the planet.

"They go to the heavens engulfing worlds," our José Martí would say.

It is time to respond.

The Non-Aligned represent more than two thirds of the United Nations and close to 55% of the world's population. We bring together nationalities, cultures, identities, human and political forces of all tendencies, lovers of peace intent upon achieving their own development, but without exclusion or hegemony.

A review of our common history, of the words and agreements of our leaders over six decades, has taught us, first of all, the libertarian, anti-imperialist vocation of the movement and the extraordinary force that can emerge from our solidarity and cooperation.

Together we have defeated colonialism and apartheid; we have faced aggression and interference, famines and natural disasters, epidemics, economic and political blockades.

We thank the Non-Aligned Movement for its longstanding position of condemnation and rejection of the blockade, of more than five decades, against our country and the Helms-Burton Act, with a marked extraterritorial nature, which reflects the increasing hostility of the United States in the face of our people's resistance.

This criminal policy is the main obstacle to our development, but it is also an expression of disrespect, by a great power, for the human rights of Cubans, international law, and free trade.

Against all human logic of coexistence with respect for differences, the blockade is intensified day after day. Barely a week goes by, without the announcement of new measures to asphyxiate our economy.

Like pirates from other times, the current government of the United States has extended its blockade policy to the sea, pursuing and punishing companies, ships, and shippers involved in the transportation of fuel to Cuba.

Today we would like to reiterate to you that we will not give in to threats and pressures, and that we will not cease in our effort to move forward on our project of building a prosperous and sustainable nation. More prosperous and more sustainable, as we are more free, independent, socialist, and sovereign.

Your Excellencies:

On behalf of Cuba, I would like to recognize the work of the Presidency of Venezuela at the head of the Movement, amidst the most complex and harsh circumstances created by imperial political attacks.

At the same time, we commit all our support to the work of the Republic of Azerbaijan, during the 2019-2021 triennium.

If you allow me, I will refer to a small page from the long history of the Non-Aligned, to return to its essence. This is part of a speech by Fidel Castro, historical leader of the Cuban Revolution and one of the bravest and boldest defenders of non-alignment. Fidel said, at the Sixth Summit in Havana, in 1979, (and I quote):

"The strength of our united countries is very powerful. Those gathered here represent the vast majority of the peoples of the world. Let us all unite tightly together, concentrate the growing forces of our vigorous Movement at the United Nations and in all international forums to demand economic justice for our peoples, so that dominion over our resources and theft of our sweat cease! Let us unite to demand our right to development, our right to life, our right to the future! "

Let us not wait for the bombs to fall on Venezuela or on Cuba, as they already fall on Syria, and before on Iraq and Libya, to support their reconstruction. Let us prevent aggression. Let us stop the runaway ambition and arrogance of the empire in time.

Cuba is proud to have been the scene of the Proclamation of Latin America as a Zone of Peace, and to have welcomed in our homeland the talks to end the long conflict in Colombia, today also at risk, given the constant attempts to destabilize the region that the United States promotes there, where it maintains nine of the 76 military bases it has across Latin America.

I would also like to remind you of the permanent disposition of our country to dialogue without conditions and based on reciprocal respect. Three years ago, during the previous summit, just 21 months had elapsed since the restoration of relations between the U.S. and Cuba.

There on Margarita Island, Venezuelan territory, our Army General reaffirmed Cuba's "... will to maintain relations of civilized coexistence with the United States," but at the same time warned, "Cuba will not renounce a single one of its principles, nor make concessions inherent to its sovereignty or independence. We will not yield in the defense of our revolutionary, anti-imperialist ideals, or in supporting the self-determination of peoples. "

We confirm the decision to continue cooperating with peoples who request it, under the principle of sharing what we have, not giving what we have left over, since all we have in abundance is our courage.

We come to reaffirm to the NAM that Cuba's new generations of leaders will give continuity to the principles that for almost 60 years we have sustained in the community of nations of which it is composed, and that we accept

the challenge and have the strength to correct the imbalances that today endanger world peace.

I say, like José Martí referring to Our America, to the member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement:

"We can no longer be the people of the leaves, who live in the air, among flower-laden treetops, crackling or buzzing, as a capricious light caresses us, and storms topple or cut us. The trees must line up, so that the giant of the seven leagues cannot pass! It is the hour of recounting, and of united march."

They have the strength of weapons. We, the strength of the peoples.

There is a historically postponed world waiting for our agreement and action.

I propose to align ourselves, but only around our own consensus:

No to war, yes for peace

No to hegemony, but for multilateralism

No to interference, but for sovereignty

No to exclusion, but for inclusion

No to hate, but for solidarity

No to the control of the world by the powerful, but for true freedom and the democratization of the United Nations and international relations.

Only unity can save us. There are more of us. Let us do more.

Thank you

# **A Better World Is Possible, And Urgently Necessary! Let Us Struggle For It!**

## **Speech at the Anti-Imperialist Solidarity Conference (November 3, 2019)**

(Exclamations of: "Diaz-Canel, for sure, give it to the Yankees!" And "Thank you, Cuba, guarantor of peace!")

Thanks to all of you.

I think we all agree that there is no better speech than that of the poets. (Laughter), but, well, we have to conduct the closing.

Dear compañero Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee;

Compañero, brother, President Nicolás Maduro Moros of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela;

Dear revolutionary leaders from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean;

Brothers and sisters, friends, colleagues:

A special greeting to all who resist and have come to the Cuban capital, which has always been, and will be, a meeting point for those who defend peace and solidarity among peoples.

With the support, enthusiasm, solidarity that you express, feel, and promise, and with Raúl and Maduro, we are giving it to the Yankees. (Applause)

We have just returned from a long, intense journey through European countries, including a visit to Azerbaijan to attend the 18th Non-Aligned Movement Summit.

The Non-Aligned Movement, which was weakened at the end of the Cold War, has retaken the spirit of Bandung, the group's founding statement. These countries are mobilized by the dramatic course of events and the crisis of multilateralism that today is putting the United Nations system in danger.

There, Cuba strongly condemned this crisis that threatens everyone, but especially the less developed.

We denounced those responsible for this situation and stated: "More lies than ever before are being told, with greater disdain and a more terrible cost to the vast majority of humanity, in the interest of a minority that has taken its luxuries to mind-boggling excesses.

"Well into the 21st century, threats and aggressions of varying degrees are launched against all sovereign governments that refuse to serve the

hegemonic power as sites for military bases, hand over resources, or yield to their mandates.”

But we were not the only ones to identify the culprit by name. Several leaders expressed alarm given the return of U.S. hegemonism that threatens and takes brutal action against governments that it considers enemies, because they do not share their policies, and fiercely attacks socialism as if it were an unacceptable social system.

On a global level, there is a great concern given setbacks in important areas such as peace, self-determination, and the sovereignty of nations, the environment, a response to climate change, human rights, social justice, and the search for economic equity.

In our geographical area, in particular, concern is no less widespread. Latin America and the Caribbean suffer the return of the Monroe Doctrine and the worst practices of McCarthyism. The uncontrolled series of interventionist actions that the current U.S. administration has unleashed, since coming to power, is based on these two imperialist postulates.

The President of the United States and his court of hawks attack the Cuban Revolution, the Bolivarian Revolution, the Sandinista Revolution, the Sao Paulo Forum, the political leadership of the Brazilian, Bolivian, Argentine left, and social, popular, progressive movements throughout the region, which they consider their backyard.

The inter-American system has reactivated mechanisms of such odious memory for the region as the Reciprocal Assistance Treaty (TIAR) and the demoralized OAS, which has been consolidated as an instrument of political pressure for the United States and oligarchies that defend neoliberalism.

How can I not laugh at the OAS, if it is such an ugly, ugly thing that makes you laugh (Applause) that is how our parents sang in the years when the group expelled Cuba for not submitting to Washington's demands. What do we sing to it now, when it could not force Venezuela to its knees, and wants to get rid of a thorn, inspecting Bolivia?

They ran over there, worried about election results in a Latin American nation with the greatest growth and improvement in the last decade, after having been the poorest and most backward in the Southern Cone for centuries.

Yes, the OAS is a very ugly thing. And very cynical. Their "worries" do not touch the depths of anger felt by the people rising up against neoliberalism, faced with pellet guns, gases, and lead bullets for protesting peacefully.

Compañeros:

It is very important to note the media component of this war we are being subjected to. At the forefront of imperial policies, the tanks of the cultural and symbolic offensive are always advancing, intent upon legitimizing the injustices of the capitalist system, discrediting the left's political

alternatives, and destroying the cultural identity of our nations, as a previous step to their destabilization plans.

Just recently, in Azerbaijan, the falsehoods that Washington has sought to impose as pretexts against the legitimate Venezuelan government were debunked.

When Nicolás Maduro Moros, in his capacity as the previous president pro tempore of the Movement, led the first part of the assembly and then presented the responsibility to Azerbaijan, practically all the delegations participating - some 120 at different levels of representation - recognized and congratulated the performance of the Bolivarian Republic at the head of the Non-Aligned Movement. (Applause)

Where was the supposed rejection of Venezuela by the international community? Why was there not a single expression of condemnation or criticism of the Bolivarian government by the governments that represent the absolute majority of the United Nations? Nonetheless, as part of the war of symbols, the media lynching launched against Maduro, the media have reported ad nauseum, in half the planet, that he has no international support.

Internally, they don't treat any better political leaders who seriously believe a change within the United States is necessary. The discourse is aggressive and dismissive of all those who do not share the approach of the President, who announces decisions that affect millions on Twitter and behaves abhorrently everywhere.

He talks about socialism without the slightest idea of what it means. And orders the end of any process or political program that intends to overcome prevailing injustice, as if he held the course of history in his hands.

He is not the first emperor to try this. And surely he will not be the last to fail. Because history can only be changed by peoples. (Applause)

Fidel said many times that the lie was the main adversary to defeat in politics and that telling the truth is the first duty of every revolutionary. This is one of our fundamental missions as practitioners of revolutionary politics. The first enemy to cut down is the lie and even more so, the imperialist lie. (Applause)

Cuba has been held under siege by lies and for years separated from its natural environment. With lies they have invaded nations, torn apart peoples, set back entire regions on their path to development.

With lies they attacked Iraq and Libya and plunged them into instability. With lies they have turned Syria into a weapons-testing facility and a theater for terrorist operations, which they have financed under the false banners of democracy and freedom.

With colossal, ridiculous lies they accuse Cuba, Venezuela, and the Sao Paulo Forum of promoting popular uprisings in all corners of the planet,



while covering their eyes, ears, and mouths, to not see, not hear, not recognize what the people in the streets are shouting: neoliberalism is an economic failure and a social disaster. (Applause)

This technique is used perversely in the desperate attempt to overthrow the Bolivarian government of Venezuela and at the same time hurt Cuba. Although these attacks began in the years of brilliant, successful integration in which Chávez and Fidel created ALBA, in recent months the United States has launched a strong campaign against any type of relationship between our two countries.

We are accused of sustaining the Bolivarian Revolution, in an irrational version of the satellite theory that was wielded against the former Soviet Union, in its time. They resort to this pretext to justify the blockade.

Cuban medical cooperation is a target of continuous attack, intent upon discrediting a noble, solidary effort that the whole world recognizes and that, along with the Latin American School of Medicine and the Henry Reeve Brigade, to respond to natural disasters, constitute the most genuine and successful expressions of cooperation between developing countries. (Applause)

These three projects, works of unquestionable human value, emerged from Fidel's ideas to honor international solidarity.

There are already more than 400,000 health professionals in Cuba who have provided services in 164 countries. At this moment, more than 29,000 are serving vulnerable populations in 65 nations.

Nothing says so much about the humanist essence of the Cuban Revolution as this cooperation. That is why the effort to disparage and destroy it is not surprising. Solidarity is alien to capitalism.

It was against them and in spite of them, that colonialism and apartheid were defeated in Africa, where the best children of the Cuban Revolution shared sacrifices and their own blood with fighters in Angola, Namibia, and other nations. We brought home from those lands, where empires always traveled to plunder, only our dead (Applause) and the conviction that we had fulfilled "the most sacred of our duties: fighting imperialism wherever it may be," as Che Guevara taught us.

Defense, education, health, science ... Cuban cooperation, the product of solidarity as a principle, was, is, and will be present in any area of noble human activity, where we can contribute. Offering solidarity is re-paying our own debt to humanity. (Applause)

For showing solidarity, and being consistent with our history of struggle and sacrifice, for being a sister and companion of peoples who resist, Cuba is condemned and sanctioned beyond limit.

Our country today suffers a criminal tightening of the blockade, the reinforcement of an immoral, illegal policy that for more than 30 years the

United Nations General Assembly has condemned virtually unanimously, without the United States reacting to the worldwide demand.

This is more evidence of disrespect for the norms of international law, which has worsened, especially with an illegal law such as the Helms Burton, which persecutes and sanctions third countries, internationalizing the blockade.

Given that these plots are not enough to defeat a people who have been fighting for independence for 151 years and will never give up, the empire now resorts to harassment, persecution, and sanctions on countries, companies, and ships that participate in transporting fuel to Cuba.

How can someone decree such an action, and then declare that the intention is to isolate the Cuban government and help its people?

Since the time of the famous Mallory Memorandum, Cuba has understood very well, through the words of its very creators, the first and ultimate goal of the blockade.

The U.S. functionary (Lester Mallory) stated: "Most Cubans support Castro...There is no effective political opposition ... The only possible way to make the government lose domestic support is by provoking disappointment and discouragement through economic dissatisfaction and hardships ...Every possible means should be immediately used to weaken the economic life ... denying Cuba funds and supplies to reduce nominal and real salaries with the objective of provoking hunger, desperation and the overthrow of the government." What maliciousness!

We will never tire of reiterating this, so no one is deceived. The United States policy toward Cuba was made very explicit in that document, dated April 6, 1960.

But before the Mallory Memorandum there are other documents and policies that reveal the historical character of imperial designs regarding Cuba and the rest of Our America. From the theory of "ripe fruit" to the Monroe Doctrine, now reactivated.

Martí saw it more clearly than others and left a warning in his political testament, his unfinished letter of May 18, 1895, in which he reveals the ultimate goal of his struggle to change the island's fate.

"... I am in danger every day of giving my life for my country and my duty – as I understand it and I have the courage to do so - to prevent in time - with the independence of Cuba - that the United States spreads across the West Indies and falls, with greater force, upon the lands of our America. All I have done thus far, and will do, is for this..."

Through sacrifice, resistance, and thanks to solidarity, our people have maintained their Revolution over all these years. The strength of the process cannot be explained without this popular will. Nor would this will exist without the high level of participation of the people in their destiny.

Thus, it must be stated clearly, the only thing in the aforementioned Mallory document that has not been accomplished is the overthrow of the Cuban government. The punishment imagined by the empire, in the epitome of cruelty, is being applied right now, as if it were a law.

As for solidarity, we have a great deal for which to thank you all, in articulating material support for us and offering the tenderness of your peoples.

And we said today, when Cuba needs the redoubling and multiplication of support for its cause, which is the cause of sovereignty and freedom for the peoples of Our America and the world:

"Truth and tenderness are not useless," as Martí said. And although sometimes it may appear that things cannot be changed, that policies cannot be defeated, or empires shaken, the history of humanity and the history of the Cuban Revolution are here to prove that it can be done. (Applause)

Cuba is the best demonstration of how much the solidarity of peoples can do. When imperialism pushed us away from Our America, expelling us - for our honor and good fortune - from the discredited OAS, when we were alone in the middle of the hemisphere, upholding the revolutionary banner of a continent in tenacious rebellion, the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples was founded here. (Applause)

It was Fidel's idea. We were not interested in relationship with governments submissive to the empire, in their ministry of colonies. We were interested and are interested, first of all, in the friendship of the peoples. (Applause)

The friendship of the peoples of America and the world pushed governments. Today Cuba has diplomatic relations with more than 160 countries, and our solidarity has also reached more than half of them.

Many of the political and social leaders gathered here will remember the hemispheric meetings of struggle against the FTAA, promoted by the Comandante en jefe, because they participated in them.

Thus was born the Continental Campaign against the FTAA, which mobilized millions and raised awareness about the need to overcome secondary differences to achieve the unity of all forces and confront that imperialist re-colonization project. And what happened? We defeated it. (Applause)

The defeat of the FTAA, like the historical defense of the Cuban Revolution, are examples of successful struggles that leave us with a great lesson: we cannot succeed split or divided. Working on the basis of all that unites us, we can build common projects to confront imperialist aggression and its oligarchic allies.

Against the blockade we will continue fighting in all arenas. Here, first of all, working, creating, and resisting without giving up on development.

Cuba's most valuable resource is its people: imaginative, cheerful, enterprising, brave, and creative.

A people who are, first and foremost, the architects of the revolutionary project, under the most adverse conditions.

If we have together chosen the path of socialism, even after the empire imposed the ridiculous theory of the end of history, it is because only with socialism can we achieve social justice and equal rights for all.

Unity around this anti-imperialist and emancipatory, socialist and solidarity project is the consequence of centuries of struggle for a uniting ideal and confirmation that we owe everything to unity. That's why they insist on breaking it. That is why millions are allocated for political subversion and the financing of cultural re-colonization projects.

They want to sell us, wrapped in sophisticated silk and tinsel paper, a world that is exploding in a thousand pieces a few steps from our borders, in Our America, where resources have been immorally transferred to transnationals in the era of neoliberalism, the consequences of which we now face.

The formula for its implementation includes convincing the masses that it is the fastest and most effective way to reach prosperity. The blind but omnipotent market, they say, will ensure that those below enjoy the benefits that will spontaneously fall from the horns of plenty in the hands of the elites. What a cruel mockery!

This is how grating inequality was produced, making possible that 1% of society owns more than the remaining 99%.

The extremely powerful advertising and entertainment industry, which moves almost as much money as the weapons or drug businesses, has constructed the myth of access for all to a world of dreams, that one day become nightmares and explode in popular anger.

Then the political vacuum appears. Many parties, competing with marketing techniques for the limited power that the market grants them to manage the leftovers of plunder, reveal the fallacy of democracy that they attempt to impose as a model of freedom. The majority takes government office without real programs of economic and social transformation.

And when movements arise to change the status quo, campaigns to discredit, soft coups, politically motivated court harassment are launched.

All Latin American leaders of the last two decades, who, to some degree, overcame the worst effects of neoliberalism through social and inclusive policies, have been or are being subjected to persecution, accusations, and even unjust imprisonment, such as the undisputed leader of Brazil Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva suffered 19 months ago. Freedom for Lula! We demand from this platform (Applause and exclamations of: "Free Lula!") Freedom for Lula, now! (Applause)

We live in the communications era. Let us build together, emancipatory platforms to oppose the colonizers with our greatest efforts and energy in pursuit of a better, possible world.

The era of confusion has passed. Our people have paid dearly for the price of economic and political experiments that have only brought wellbeing to elites, in the style of the thug in command of the empire, who believes that the world can be bought and sold on the stock market.

Recent victories of the left in Bolivia and Argentina, the heroic resistance of Venezuela and Cuba to total economic siege, the anti-colonial protests that have put a brake on market formulas show that we cannot be demobilized again.

The left must learn and finally assume the hard lessons of these years of struggle in which splits and lack of unity weakened our forces, and the right unleashed a re-conquest to destroy what had been accomplished.

I note the significant representation of young people in this auditorium and in the streets of Our America, where protest against the abuses of neoliberalism have occurred.

Seeing youth rebelling and fighting for their rights, and for a better fate for their countries, is encouraging and challenging at the same time. (Applause) Because, as Fidel taught us, the struggle of this era is expressed above all in the field of ideas.

We will always defend Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, proclaimed in Havana in 2014 during the hopeful days of a complete Celac, (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) in decline today.

The mobilizations and peaceful protests with which our peoples are demanding their rights are exemplary. And these rights are being won.

Friends, brothers, compañeros, compañeras:

In your beautiful Declaration of Solidarity with the Cuban Revolution, you have written: "The peoples of the world need the example of Cuba", and recalled Martí's statement that maintains its relevance: "Whoever rises today with Cuba rises for all time." Thanks for saying it and doing it! (Applause and exclamations of: "Cuba yes, blockade no!")

I express profound gratitude to all those who have come, from near or far, assuming their expenses, to respond to a convocation you yourselves made, to condemn the blockade and articulate efforts that contribute to its definitive defeat.

I especially thank Latin American leaders who have suffered and suffer persecution and punishment for attempting to exchange a history of abuse for the history of our peoples' liberation.

Today we want to reiterate our strongest support and solidarity with the legitimate president of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, (Applause), and the

civic-military union of his people, and with Commandante Daniel Ortega Saavedra and the Sandinista National Liberation Front of Nicaragua, also under attack (Applause and exclamations of: Long live Sandino!)

The persistent destabilization attempts that their governments face, are beginning to spread, and we see this today in right-wing efforts to steal the victory of Evo Morales in Bolivia, promoting violence and ignoring the results, in what clearly appears to be the preparation of a coup, which must be denounced (Applause and exclamations of: "They will not pass!")

Thus, we reiterate here our congratulations to Evo for his convincing electoral victory, and to Alberto and Cristina Fernández, who have raised new hope in Argentina. (Applause)

Our solidarity, effective and invariable, with all just causes that are being waged in the region and in the world: with the independence of Puerto Rico (Applause and exclamations of: "Independence for Puerto Rico!"), whose people have managed to keep alive their identity, flag, and hopes for independence, for more than a hundred years of colonialism, an extraordinary symbol of the powerful cultural resistance of Latin America and the Caribbean. Long live free Puerto Rico! (Applause and exclamations of: "Viva!")

We also support Argentina's historical demand to recover sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands. (Applause)

We condemn the imperialist intervention against Syria, and with you demand respect for their sovereignty and territorial integrity. (Applause)

We also reaffirm solidarity with the struggles of the Palestinian and Saharawi peoples for the right to self-determination (Applause); with the process of rapprochement and inter-Korean dialogue and for the end of sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; and with the peace process in Colombia. (Applause)

No just cause is alien to us, and as a nation that owes part of its existence to solidarity, we will never renounce its practice, as a principle. (Applause)

Brothers Sisters:

You have called today for unity among political forces and the social and popular movements of the left, to continue to raise consciousness, generate ideas, and organize for the struggle.

We see this struggle in the battle for the truth. We must defeat the lies on which wars of all kinds against our peoples are launched: informing, persuading, mobilizing, marching with the poor of the earth, who have grown tired of lies and abuse. Proposing and creating programs that respond to the most pressing demands of workers, students, farmers, intellectuals, and artists.

The approved Action Plan confirms that progressive sectors are aware of the urgent need for unity, if we really want to build together an anti-

imperialist, emancipatory project, committed to genuine and long delayed integration.

On behalf of Cuba, we would like to reaffirm that the new generation of Cuban leaders, trained and educated by the historical generation of Fidel and Raúl, are revolutionaries, socialists, faithful to Fidel and Martí (Applause), and that we will not yield a millimeter in our positions in favor of independence, sovereignty, and social justice. And joined with the peoples who struggle and resist, we will always uphold solidarity as a fundamental principle, to which we owe so much.

This is why we make our own the words of Fidel, when, more than 50 years ago, referring to the early solidarity that the Revolution found with its cause, he said: "The world has shown solidarity with Cuba and that is why Cuba feels more and more solidarity every day with all the peoples of the world."

In memory of Fidel and Chávez, two of the greats of Our America, whom we were fortunate to meet, listen to, and follow in the most altruistic practice of solidarity, we look to their work as a guide for the new, challenging times that await us.

I believe we all feel that great avenues are opening up, where free men now walk to build a better society. (Applause and exclamations)

A better world is possible, and urgently necessary! Let us fight for it!

Ever onward to victory!

(Ovation).

# **Havana, City Of Peace And Dignity**

## **Speech welcoming visitors on the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Havana (November 16, 2019)**

Dear friends who have come from so many corners of the earth to salute the 500 years of our beloved capital:

Half a millennium ago, the town of San Cristóbal de La Habana was founded here, which since then has become a point of arrival and departure, meeting and permanence in this world that those who did not know it called new. But they named it well, because there is always something surprising on this side of the Atlantic, where our archipelago is a key and a bridge, a door or a wall, depending on who arrives and with what motivation they arrive. Open, hospitable, friendly, and supportive for friends. Closed, impassable, invincible for those who attempt to subjugate.

Numerous heads of state and government, kings, princes, ministers, and artistic personalities, literary figures, creators of all disciplines, and representatives from the most diverse regions and political views, have touched Havana history by becoming protagonists and witnesses of Cuba's noble ecumenical vocation. Three Catholic popes have also visited us in the last 20 years: John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis, as well as Patriarch Kirill of the Orthodox Church of all Russia.

In 2016, in a historic meeting that ended a thousand-year-old schism took place here, between the highest authorities of two branches of Christianity: the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church. Then Pope Francis said that Havana was on its way to being the Capital of Unity.

It is a just title for the city previously named a World Heritage Site, and more recently a Wonder City, and which many also recognize as a city of peace, since the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace was signed here in 2014.

And we say this with pride, but also with pain, at a time when instability, crisis, and uncertainty reign in different parts of the world and in our own region. When our celebration, imagined and conceived with such emotion and joy, is accompanied by the bitter taste of a coup in a sister nation, where right now, facing harassment and threats are our doctors and health workers, missionaries of life, who have only love to oppose hate.

We look to the future from the past, which we commemorate today, because memory is the fundamental basis of human spirituality. The Havana that welcomes you offers an accumulation of multiple cultural contributions, rebellion and resistance, and milestones that have impacted the history of humanity.

In our bay, the battleship Maine was exploded, a pretext to launch the first war of modern imperialism. Along the bustling Malecon, the Caravan of



Freedom entered bearing the Cuban Revolution, with Comandante en jefe Fidel Castro in front.

On one of our most emblematic corners, 23rd and 12th, Cuba declared itself the first socialist state in the Western Hemisphere, and all along the Havana coastline, images forever immortalize an army of boys defending our sovereignty in "the bright and sad days of the Caribbean Crisis."

And in José Martí Plaza de la Revolución, the political and administrative heart of the country, there have been popular demonstrations that figure among the most massive in the world, including those for the First and Second Declarations of Havana, in defense of sovereignty, independence, and national dignity.

This city is the birthplace and home of world-renowned Cubans such as Felix Varela, José Martí, Carlos Juan Finlay, José Raúl Capablanca, Bola de Nieve, Alejo Carpentier, Alicia Alonso, and an infinite list of other creators born elsewhere, but based here, to be nurtured by the sensation that we as a nation are blessed by a number of men and women of extraordinary values, who feel the special pride of calling themselves Cuban.

Our Havana has hosted two Summits of the Non-Aligned Movement, an Ibero-American Summit, a Group of 77 plus China Summit, and a Community of Latin American and Caribbean States Summit.

Countless bilateral and multilateral agreements that have impacted international relations have been signed here. And here were the first, historic, heartfelt meetings between Fidel and Chavez, from which the agreements for the creation of ALBA-TCP would be born, a paradigmatic integration project that will reach its 15th anniversary in December.

The University of Havana, alma mater of Higher Education in Cuba stands on one of our hills. A city of science, dance, cinema, literature, of important sporting, cultural, friendship, and solidarity events with the peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, Havana can also be considered today an example of resistance against neoliberalism and imperialism, a meeting point for all those in the world who defend justice and true democracy, democracy that contemplates the fate of the poor of the earth and not only of economically powerful elites, and also of all who believe that a better world is possible, without interference or imperial domination.

We cannot overlook reaffirming today: this has also been, for the last 60 years, the city of dignity, a bastion of resistance to the longest, most unjust, and genocidal blockade that has ever been imposed on an entire people by a powerful empire.

Havana, beautiful, and modest, as you have already seen, is hospitable and safe for its citizens and all who visit and learn to understand its unique and admirable way of being, and making those who love it happy.

Welcome again, dear friends, and thank you for joining us for the 500th anniversary celebrations of our beloved capital.

# **Let Us Struggle Together For A Better World – Possible, Just And Necessary!**

## **Speech at Cuban Solidarity Event in Argentina (December 9, 2019)**

Long live Argentina! (Applause and exclamations of: Viva!)

Long live Cuba! (Applause and exclamations of: Viva!)

Long live Fidel! (Exclamations of: Viva!)

Long live Che! (Exclamations of: Viva!)

Dear friends;

Argentinean brothers and sisters:

First of all, I want to thank the Argentine people. We are visiting this beautiful, sister land for the first time. We have been here a few hours that seem like a full day. In the meetings we had with representatives of the Argentine people - artists, writers, sociologists, intellectuals, business leaders and people on the street - I can tell you that we have learned a lot and that we have received a great deal of affection.

We would also like to thank the solidarity with Cuba movement in Argentina, authorities at the University of Buenos Aires and the Exact Sciences department for the opportunity to have this moving, also combative, event.

I would like to thank Eugenia for her words, with the sensitivity of a doctor trained in Cuba.

And Leonel's musical performance with his bandoneon. I met Leonel at the home of an Argentine friend who has lived in Cuba for many years. In the patio of that house, one night, Leonel delighted us with his songs, with Argentine tango, with songs by Silvio and also by Fito. Leonel was on a tour of Cuba; he was on a backpack tour, and told us that he was going to walk across the country with such humility that we set about the task of calling Party comrades, everyday, in every one of the provinces Leonel passed through, so that, as we Cubans say, "They would throw him a line" and help him out. (Laughter and applause)

Thanks to Hugo for his words, representing Argentine workers.

Thanks to Paula for her guitar music and song. Paula was with us today in the meeting with artists. She had her guitar, but there wasn't time for her to sing, so, good, she sang here.

Thanks to all of you.

One of the first impressions we had on this trip, in this meeting, is that we agree on many ideas that must be defended, and we must defend them whatever the consequences.

I would also like to express a personal sentiment about what is happening in this event, what is happening in this meeting: I am convinced that Fidel and Che are present here. (Applause)

I am very excited to finally be, for the first time, in Argentina and with Argentine friends, sisters and brothers. I think you know the reasons as well as I do: for Cubans this is a nation for we hold special affection, practically, since we were born. Perhaps that first feelings come from the sounds of tango, which has always had its place on almost every radio station in Cuba.

But there is a more profound reason: Che was born here. He was also declared Cuban by birth, an exceptional case that he shares in our history with only Generalísimo Máximo Gómez, an extraordinary Dominican soldier who became General in Chief of the Mambi troops in our wars of independence.

Additionally, the city where I was born, raised and trained as a revolutionary leader, is Santa Clara, which has proudly proclaimed itself the City of Che, because one of the decisive battles leading to the January 1, 1959 victory, was successfully fought there, under his command. Plus, his remains rest in this city.

Friends and emotions, already inseparable from our feelings, have been added to this history, from all the compañeros who Che brought with him to the construction of our dreams of social justice in the founding years, to the pain shared by the 30,000 disappeared in Argentina (applause), the struggles of the Grandmothers and Mothers of Plaza de Mayo (applause); the passion for soccer, Maradona and his personal friendship with Fidel (applause); the best of Latin American cinema and Argentine rock; to Néstor and Cristina (applause), whose legacy has now been crystallized in Alberto's triumph. And tomorrow, when the dawn in Argentina is brighter, brighter in hope, Cuba will be with you. (Applause)

As León Gieco would say, everything is saved in memory, and what we share is immense and deep.

Other reasons for the emotion are a little more private, and I am going to share them today, publicly, for the first time.

In July 2006, having just arrived from his last trip abroad, precisely to Argentina, to attend a historic Mercosur Summit, the Comandante en jefe of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, called Holguín, where I was then leading the Communist Party of Cuba, to tell me that, after the July 26 commemoration in the neighboring province of Granma, he would come to our province.

I still remember the enthusiasm with which Fidel arrived. Less than a month from his 80's, he didn't seem exhausted by the long flight or by the intensity of the emotions experienced here, and then in Bayamo, the capital of Granma.

At the Mercosur meeting he had presented, and proposed to share with the governments of the bloc, Cuba's experiences in the Energy Efficiency Program. Then he and Chavez visited Che's museum-house in Altavracia, where they told the press about the dreams of integration they both held.

You can find some video, on the Internet, of the multitudinous reception that our leaders received on that visit to Che's home, and the enthusiasm of both of them to give, to share, to integrate human resources, and all kinds. They spoke of a joint project to restore the vision of millions of people: Mission Miracle, which later would have its own missionaries, precisely in Cordoba.

At that province's historic university, which conducted a reform that impacted the whole of America, Fidel and Chávez delivered speeches that are still moving. There, the Comandante en jefe described as incredible the fact that there were still 50 million illiterates in the hemisphere and more than 200 million semi-literates or functional illiterates, and he therefore promoted the literacy program "Yo sí puedo," which had already arrived in Bolivia with the collaboration of Cuba and Venezuela, and which is now also present in Argentina.

Later, in Holguín, he told me with energy and passion that I will never forget: "ALBA is here." He was referring to a electrical generation project to distribute energy that we were inaugurating, but also to the Latin Americans who at that time were studying medicine and other specialties in the province: 1,000 of them Bolivians who lived in the homes of Holguin families, and thousands of Venezuelans who were being trained as social workers, all of them participated in that memorable event.

In fact, within a few days we will be celebrating, in Havana, the 15th anniversary of the ideas of Fidel and Chávez that crystallized in ALBA-TCP, an alliance of solidarity including several countries, which began one of the most promising and hopeful periods in the history of Our America. So promising and hopeful that the enemies of regional integration have insisted on breaking it up, attacking progressive governments and their solidarity projects mercilessly, with the most barbaric methods.

From Honduras to Paraguay, from Ecuador to Brazil, from Nicaragua to Bolivia, from Venezuela to Cuba, they have put into practice, to the best of their ability, all the possible varieties of coups and have reactivated the worse practices of the OAS to carry them out.

It is impossible to forget that it was precisely in Córdoba, in 2006, at the Peoples' Summit, where Hugo Chávez announced that Venezuelan oil had as its priority the countries of the regional bloc.

He also warned of the dangers of U.S. hegemony that "must end, because it threatens the world," after Fidel had commented, "This integration has centuries-old enemies and they are not pleased with the news of this meeting." Subsequent events are proving both leaders right every day in Our America.

Friends:

I have recalled with emotion the unforgettable days of Fidel's visit to Argentina in 2006, but I cannot fail to cite the one he made three years earlier, in 2003, with the same purpose we have today, that of participating in a historic inauguration, on that occasion, that of Nestor.

The Law School stairway at the University of Buenos Aires, overflowing with students, professors, people, more than 50,000 people attentive to a speech of more than two hours - mine won't be that long (laughter) - on a cold Buenos Aires night, is part of our most intimate perception of what it means to be and to feel Latin American and of the emotional connection between our peoples. Fidel's words that night had extraordinary repercussions given their content, denouncing the neoliberal model that was being imposed in the region with a high social cost, particularly here, where it generated great political instability due to the hardship and suffering it caused the Argentine people. Some friends who organized that meeting are participating here today, as well.

The context was very similar to what we are facing today. The Argentine people welcomed Néstor's arrival to the Presidency with joy and hope. The country was still enormously indebted and immersed in a deep crisis, while Cuba was threatened by the warmongering government of then-President George W. Bush, determined to attack what he defined as "dark corners of the world," among which he included us, at the same time as the blockade was tightened. Just change the names and we are living in the same times.

Let this reminder serve to reiterate here that the Cuban people will not be intimidated by the current U.S. administration either! (Applause)

The panorama is also one of struggle for the peoples' rights, for unity and peace in our region, against neoliberal dictatorships and their military, police, judicial and media tools, and for the preservation of the planet and its increasingly threatened natural resources.

Neoliberal oligarchies, supported by the United States government, are intent upon maintaining control of everything they have seized in recent years using deceitful, perverse methods.

Supported by corrupt judges and their monopoly control of the media in the fast-moving era of social networks, they promote and implement modern techniques of manipulation and politically motivated judicial processes, almost always focused on pursuing, imprisoning and destroying the image of progressive political and social leaders of the left.

The most recent episode in this confrontation is the coup against the constitutional president of Bolivia, Evo Morales Ayma, to whom we reiterate, here, our unwavering solidarity and support for him, and his noble people, as well. (Applause)

In Bolivia, as in other South American countries, brutal repression and serious human rights violations, with dozens of deaths, hundreds of

wounded and thousands of people detained in social protests against the coup, against neoliberal policies and laws and social violence, are occurring before the complicit gaze of the United States, oligarchic governments and the discredited OAS.

We have not read or heard a single statement from any of them, despite the breakdown of institutions and the flagrant, massive violation of the rights of thousands of protesting citizens, most of them, today in Latin America, are youth.

Presenting the protests as a threat to the allegedly democratic order is a cruel joke.

Latin Americans have realized that neoliberal politicians and mainstream politics are powerless to solve our problems or improve lives, and Latin America is tired of them.

Wage cuts, weakening of labor rights, privatization and cutbacks in public services do not appear in campaign speeches. They are applied later in a betrayal of the people to whom they lied. And as Abraham Lincoln said in his era: "You can fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time."

Neoliberalism promoted by the United States in Latin America made citizens more unequal, poorer, less protected and led them to distrust politicians.

In Latin America, neoliberalism weakened social benefits, considering them "too generous" and reduced access to universal health care, education and pensions.

It is easy to understand that the peoples of Our America now reject the impact of neoliberalism, which increased inequality, poverty, violence and criminality. It is not true that the people are causing destabilization. They are only defending their fundamental rights.

Cuba calls for an end to attacks on young people and students who are killed, left blind, disabled or seriously wounded for telling their truths.

Cuba calls on all honest political forces on the planet to demand an end to the attacks and judicial persecution of Vice-President Cristina Fernández and former Brazilian President Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva. (Applause)

Cuba alerts, at the same time, that the battle against neoliberalism and imperialism will be tougher, insofar as they have managed to advance unjust free trade agreements with which they have set a dangerous trap as serious as the Free Trade Area of the Americas, which was defeated here, in Argentina, in the unforgettable Mar del Plata Summit in 2005, led by Néstor and Chávez.

Dear friends:

A few days ago, our Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a strong statement denouncing the dirty war that imperialism and national oligarchies are waging against progressive processes in the region.

The document recounts destabilization efforts promoted from Washington, whose main gang leaders - it is not possible to call them anything else - no longer use euphemisms to define us as their "backyard," to wield the Monroe Doctrine and extend the worst practices of McCarthyism, using more sophisticated formulas, like so-called lawfare, seeking to spread the idea that leaders of the left are corrupt.

At a time when years, months and days have been painfully instructive in Our America regarding so-called Fourth Generation War, Cristina's recent confrontation with her executioners proves once again what Fidel said so many times: "There is no weapon more powerful than the truth." Even the most hostile media have been obliged to recognize the obvious maneuver and the illegality of methods used in the attempt to get rid of the Frente de Todos candidates for the Presidency.

The electoral victory, amidst this fierce campaign, is the best expression of the hopes renewed by this inauguration, which we are honored to attend, to witness another historic moment in this admirable country, and to congratulate its protagonists. (Applause)

Congratulations Alberto and congratulations Cristina, for the courage and unity you have maintained in the face of attempts by your political adversaries to break you. Congratulations Argentina! (Applause)

As the song says: Whoever said that everything is lost, Cuba comes to offer its heart (Applause and shouts of: "Cuba, Cuba, Cuba, the people salute you!")

Cuba has come to express its solidarity with the new government of this sister nation and to share with all of you, who have defended and supported the Cuban people in the darkest hours, an assessment of the current situation and the ways we are confronting it.

I know that you all closely follow the news about our country and I will not abuse the time you have taken from other tasks to be with us.

I would just like to confirm that, as we have denounced in the United Nations and in all forums and platforms possible, the blockade of Cuba has been criminally tightened, and not a week goes by without a new decision to impose sanctions on the Cuban economy and our finances, even affecting third parties, as a practice of real economic terrorism.

This persecution is accompanied by threats and accusations that are as false as they are ridiculous, whether in the message comes from Presidential spokespeople, Mr. Pompeo, or the President of the United States.

With utmost maliciousness, in an attempt to deny Cuba any means of access to financial resources, they have launched a cynical, criminal crusade against our international medical cooperation, accusing the country of modern slavery and trafficking in persons, referring to our health system professionals, for the purpose - they say - of exploitation or alleged interference by this personnel in the internal affairs of states with which cooperation is maintained. At the same time, they are trying to re-establish the so-called Parole Program for Cuban medical professionals, with the open objective of sabotaging our bilateral agreements, depriving beneficiary nations of these services and our country - blockaded for six decades - of highly qualified human resources.

A new ghost is sweeping the world: now Cuba and Venezuela are accused of promoting instability, into which neoliberalism - with its practices of unequal trade and disdain for solidarity - has plunged several countries.

As the experts state, an attempt is being made to spread a Goebelian world view, in the worst style of German Nazism, in the case of Cuba, to sustain the genocidal blockade policy, condemned by the vast majority on the planet.

What is Cuba doing to confront this illegal, immoral war, which contravenes all international agreements guiding relations between sovereign countries?

We have chosen to resist and defend ourselves by creating, with an emphasis on defense and the economy. When we affirm that 'We Are Cuba' and 'We Are Continuity, we are not repeated just another slogan, we are expressing the will to maintain the conquests of the Revolution and the dignity that our leaders bequeathed to us, (applause) an intention shared by the absolute majority of the Cuban people.

José Martí said: "Neither peoples nor men respect those who do not demand respect ... Men and peoples go through this world sticking their fingers into the flesh of others to see if it is soft or if it resists, and we must make our flesh hard, to fend off impudent fingers." Che Guevara later warned that imperialism cannot be trusted "not even a tiny bit." Our entire history has been built on firm pillars of resistance against annexationist zeal and imperial interference, not only in our own destiny, but in the destinies of all of Our America and of all peoples fighting for their sovereignty.

Fidel, who was Martí's best disciple and a brilliant interpreter of the Latin American and universal revolutionary ideal, from Bolívar to the present day, educated us in solidarity and internationalism without borders. In many ways he taught us to understand and practice Martí's principle that 'Homeland is Humanity,' from Africa's lands to Our America and the rest of the world, including the most honorable of the U.S. people.

For Cuba, the challenge is colossal. The inordinate hostility of the current U.S. government violates international law and rules of navigation and commerce, and has obliged us to face severe difficulties in acquiring fuel.



The blockade is tightened with the activation of the Helms-Burton Act's Title III, through which the United States government commits massive violations of the Cuban people's human rights, while damaging international companies and sovereign third countries.

These threats, however, will not stop us or divert us from our course. We are prepared to face the consequences of the electoral campaign in that country, which could lead to the aggravation of confrontational policies toward Cuba and other sister countries.

We said so at the recent Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, in Azerbaijan, where widespread alarm was expressed given the crisis of multilateralism, which today puts the United Nations system at risk.

That is to say, we are not alone in this fight against threats to regional and planetary peace and stability. At the global level, there is great concern about setbacks in important areas such as self-determination and the sovereignty of nations, the environment and confronting climate change, human rights, social justice and the search for equity.

We could add the inter-American system to this list of setbacks, with the reactivation of mechanisms as painfully recalled as the Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (TIAR), which the empire itself discredited here, in the Malvinas, by supporting extra-regional powers (applause), while renewing the aggressiveness of the disgraced OAS and its secretary general, increasingly used as instruments of political pressure by the United States against Our America.

That is why, for us, as for other leftwing and progressive governments, the task that Fidel repeated so many times continues to be of the first order: to disseminate ideas and values, to create awareness and popular mobilization, to unite forces. Above all, to be united - in all our diversity, but united! (Applause)

It is no coincidence that among the objectives of the imperial and oligarchic onslaught are Celac, Unasur, Mercosur and ALBA, and that, time and again, they insist that they will not stop until they defeat Cuba, Cuba's example, Cuba's audacity.

And it is legitimate to ask: Why Cuba? The Revolution, from its very beginning, has been nothing more than a permanent search for the best way to respond to the demands and hopes of the majority. Isn't that true democracy?

Fidel, Raúl and their compañeros of the Centennial Generation, who are still with us, taught us the value of responsibility that is assumed before the people. With them we learned not to say: believe, but to say: read; to transform the old structures of abuse and inequality left by the non-governments of the pseudo-republic in which Yankee ambassadors held more power than those who occupied the Presidential Palace, and to place

the people in the role of protagonist of the changes, from the radical Agrarian Reform to the exercise of People's Power.

We are working on the basis of these principles, with our ears to the ground, as our Army General Raúl Castro Ruz says, who, from the Party, leads the generational transition process, that in Cuba takes into consideration the effort and results of cadres and leaders trained in the provinces, in municipalities and neighborhood organizations.

Government in Cuba functions within this intense, living relationship with the people, with their demands and needs. We are not a perfect society, because we are, in the first place, a human society and our archipelago is not protected by a glass jar from the effects of a globalized world, where totally opposite policies predominate, but we are trying to, at least, make our society as just and egalitarian as possible.

We could advance faster and achieve better results if the empire would lift the siege. But we will not renounce our social justice project because of their criminal blockade or their outrageous financial persecution that makes the arrival of a barrel of oil to Cuba practically impossible without punishment for those who dare to transport it.

With Fidel we also learned to turn setbacks into victory and obstacles into challenges.

If the empire tries to discredit socialism by stifling any development effort in Cuba, our nation is demonstrating just the opposite. Thanks to socialism, socialist planning, the socialist ideal, we have built a country where everyone's fate is important to everyone (applause); a humane, educated, solidary and just society to the extent that a Third World nation, with few natural resources and surrounded by the most powerful empire in history, can be.

We are Cuba! We are continuity! We are the bone stuck in the throat of the empire that it has been trying to swallow for almost a century and a half, and cannot. And again, as before, as always: We will triumph! (Applause)

Sisters and brothers:

With lies as infamous and ridiculous as those that are being launched today against the new Argentine government, they once surrounded Cuba and for years separated us from our brothers in the region, among them Argentina. From Argentina no less - the favorite daughter of the Greater Homeland, which José Martí served as consul and defended at the Monetary Conference of the Americas. The beloved Argentina in which Che Guevara was born! The same Argentina that welcomed Fidel when the Revolution first triumphed and that has offered us so much solidarity over sixty years. Argentina, whose children we have lovingly welcomed in Cuba, and with whom we have shared efforts and achieved results in areas such as literacy, the training of doctors and other professionals, and the miraculous

Operation Miracle, which has restored vision to millions in Latin America and the Caribbean. (Applause)

May the imperialists and the oligarchs beware: there is no force on earth that can divide our peoples. There is no force on earth that can separate Cuba and Argentina! (Chants and applause).

You embody the best spirit of a deep and true Argentina. You confirm the triumph of the popular and peasant movements, unions, political forces, student and women's organizations, as well as intellectual groups. That is why you have lived a day of celebration and commitment to greater justice.

When we arrived here, we felt the spirit of joy in the air, the hope recovered, once again, from the bottom of the neoliberal well.

In the name of Cuba, we reaffirm that we will continue to be firm, loyal revolutionaries, worthy of our forefathers, and that we will not yield an inch in defense of independence, sovereignty and social justice, nor will we renounce solidarity with peoples who fight and resist.

Let us struggle together for a better world, one that is possible, just and necessary!

Always onward to victory!

(Ovation)

# **They Cannot Forgive Us For Uniting In Solidarity As Latin Americans And Caribbeans Without Imperial Tutelage**

## **Speech on the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Bolivarian Alliance (December 14, 2019)**

Good evening.

This event is turned around: Maduro, Ralf and Daniel spoke just a bit and now I am going to have to speak a little more. (Laughter)

Dear Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee;

Dear ALBA-TCP heads of state and government;

Dear heads of delegations and guests:

Students of our universities, the present and future of the Cuban nation. To you and to all young people of Cuba, Latin America and the Caribbean, we address you today!

We have come here, to our glorious Grand Stairway, to celebrate 15 years of ALBA-TCP, because this alliance has its roots in the first meeting of two giants of Our America: the Comandante en jefe of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, and the then (young) leader of the Bolivarian Movement 200, Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías.

That meeting, which changed the history of Latin America and the Caribbean and impacted the world, took place December 13-15, 1994.

As is occurring today, we were living complex, uncertain days for the region and the world. And it was here nearby, in the University of Havana's Aula Magna, where for the first time the analyses and premonitory proposals were heard of what, with time, joint effort, and the advance of progressive governments, would emerge in 2004 as this paradigm of solidary integration that we know as ALBA-TCP.

We also choose the Stairway, the door to our University, one of the oldest in America, because the present and future of Cuba and much of the rest of the world pass through here every day, young people from sister nations, students who share classrooms and dreams with our sons and daughters.

We firmly believe that universities cannot be disconnected from our world or its pressing problems. Here Fidel became a revolutionary, here he spoke to his Latin American contemporaries, with Hugo Chávez, here we study and think about the best possible world that we revolutionaries have set out to set our minds to winning.

Sisters and brothers:

Exactly one year ago, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America met with the objective of establishing common positions in the face of the evident intensification of aggression against our nations. The forecasts of that moment were not exaggerated.

The government of the United States and its allies launched, and insist on continuing, a ferocious, unscrupulous destabilization campaign in the region.

They are doing so by resuming the brutal application of the Monroe Doctrine, to which the current administration in Washington has openly and arrogantly committed itself.

They have escalated their actions against the sister Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, violating the most elementary principles of international law. They have gone so far as to designate who can speak on behalf of Venezuela and make decisions on the country's funds and real estate outside its territory. Never before in history has democracy been so offended, speaking in the name of democracy while trampling it.

The recent invocation against Venezuela of the obsolete Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (TIAR) - which never served to safeguard the interests of the region - is another warning that peace, democracy and security are being threatened.

What else is the purpose of reviving an institution like TIAR, which backed coups, established military dictatorships and was unable to support one of its members when an extra-regional power occupied its territory and unleashed a war?

The United States coordinated attacks on the homeland of Bolívar and Chávez without understanding that the determination of its people is strengthened even more in the face of foreign aggression. They failed and will continue to fail before the solid civil-military union and the courage of millions of Venezuelans, who have always sworn to be loyal, and never traitors. (Applause)

Here is our brother Nicolás Maduro, representing that victorious, firm union.

Long live the Bolivarian Revolution! (Exclamations of: Viva!)

We reiterate our solidarity with the Sandinista Popular Revolution, which with its president at the forefront, Comandante Daniel Ortega Saavedra, is resisting imperial attacks on Nicaragua, despite the threats, and advancing on the path of reconciliation, peace and just development for its country.

Long live the Sandinista Revolution! (Exclamations of: Viva!)

We celebrate the release of the Brazilian workers' leader and former President of that country, compañero Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva, and at the same time we call on everyone to continue demanding his full freedom, the recognition of his innocence and the restitution of all his political rights.

Despite imperial conspiracies and the politicization of judicial systems, corruption, and the discrediting of politics by agents of imperialism, neoliberalism and the media, Lula's example shows that we will always find a way to fight for truth, dignity and solidarity in order to defeat lies.

Bolivia, the absent brother, deserves special mention.

The coup against constitutional President Evo Morales Ayma confirmed that the United States and reactionary forces do not hesitate to violate, by any means, the people's freedoms and human rights to reverse emancipatory processes in the region. As always, they used their faithful pawn: the Organization of American States (OAS).

It is no surprise that the first foreign policy move by the coup plotters in Bolivia, following the imperialists' script, was to leave ALBA.

In countries like Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Brazil, we watch with pain and indignation as the number of deaths rises and injuries reach thousands, with eye injuries increasing to hundreds of young people, as a result of repression as brutal as that we remember from the dark days of military dictatorships. Social activists, journalists and former guerrillas are murdered. Cases of violence, torture and rape of detainees now number in the hundreds.

Several of the military and police authorities who today are the protagonists of this horrible repression were trained at the now defunct School of the Americas. Those who persecute leftist and progressive leaders were trained in the current International Academy for Law Enforcement, also made in the USA.

Day by day, we follow with admiration the dramatic course of the people's resistance and the growing mobilizations.

From this podium, we emphatically denounce the complicit, shameful silence of many, the distortion and cover-up of what occurred in Bolivia by the corporate, oligarchic media.

And here today, Cuba reaffirms our support and solidarity with compañero Evo Morales Ayma. (Applause) Long live the governments and peoples who uphold dignity and sovereignty by welcoming and supporting the persecuted leaders! (Exclamations of: Vivan!)

Our health personnel who served in Bolivia are closely acquainted with the brutality of the coup plotters, whose repressive forces, led directly by the United States, physically assaulted two collaborators, while 54 were unjustly detained, some for several days.

Members of the Cuban Medical Brigade were, for absolutely no reason, humiliated, searched and stripped of their belongings. The coup authorities incited hatred against Cubans.

The cowardice of these repressors contrasted sharply with the dignity and courage of our self-sacrificing professionals, who deserve recognition for

their unwavering stance, a product of Cuba's internationalist tradition. (Applause)

They are all back, ready to defend the homeland, and take on the next mission.

The events that have transpired in Bolivia sound the alarm and alert us. Once again "the tiger lurks," as Martí said in his magnificent essay *Our America*:

"The colony continued to live within the republic; and our America is being saved from its great errors (...) by the superior virtue, fertilized with necessary blood, of the republic that fights against the colony. The tiger waits, behind every tree, crouched in every corner".

In our recent visit to Argentina, to attend the inauguration of Alberto and Cristina, we held a valuable dialogue with important intellectuals and artists in that country.

From all of them, we heard the most formidable criticism of neoliberalism "the tiger that lurks" and its serious consequences for the peoples of America that have been destroyed by neoliberal experiments.

Argentine filmmaker and current Minister of Culture Tristán Bauer has just documented the serious social costs of neoliberalism in the four years of the Macri administration, in a documentary titled: *Tierra arrasada*.

Others present recalled that these processes are supported by a powerful media network that progressive projects must confront in an unequal battle. And proposals were made to promote a kind of cultural strategy that addresses this asymmetry.

What remains of the colonial mentality in America must disappear before our peoples disappear, with their dreams of emancipation and integration, postponed since Bolívar's times.

It is essential to disseminate ideas and values to defend our conquests. And it is also necessary to join together in the area of communication so that the colonial mentality does not engulf us with its ammunition of false symbols, like the mirrors that the conquerors gave to our noble, original inhabitants, in exchange for the natural wealth with which they have built their power.

The magnificent ideas that were presented in just two hours, during the meeting with Argentine friends, confirm the enormous potential of the imaginative Latin American intelligentsia, whose best exponents have always been allies in the battle for social justice.

Compañeras and compañeros:

Even in the face of the most brutal U.S. pressure, Cuba won a resounding victory at the United Nations, when 187 countries voted in favor of our

resolution condemning the U.S. economic, commercial and financial blockade.

Those who did not have the courage to resist U.S. pressure and did not dare to condemn the blockade of Cuba bear the responsibility of supporting a policy that no people on earth approves, because it is criminal, because it violates the human rights of millions, because it is extraterritorial, illegal and outrageous.

And because what they are doing to Cuba, today, they will do tomorrow to other nations, as has been proven more than once in recent years. No one is exempt from the empire's whip, and to allow others to be beaten is to open the way to lashings for all.

We are pleased to know that this attitude does not reflect what the fraternal peoples of Brazil and Colombia truly feel.

In victories such as the UN condemnation of the blockade, ALBA has been and must continue to be a front of unity and resistance to the empire, to coups and to interventionist positions that shame the honorable men and women of our continent.

Likewise, we salute and are encouraged by progressive victories in Mexico and Argentina, where new governments have already shown, in a very short period, their commitment to peace, democracy, development and social justice for the peoples, and to the genuine unity and integration of Our America.

In recent months we have heard ridiculous accusations of the Cuban and Bolivarian revolutions, in a malicious attempt to justify what they refuse to understand: the profound reasons for popular revolts against neoliberalism that continue to take place in several countries of the region. They do not surprise us.

The popular demonstrations are the result of struggles against inequality and social injustices accumulated over the years. And they are here to stay, and will increase if their causes are not addressed.

Those who repress refuse to see in these demonstrations the real causes, because, in order to maintain power, neoliberalism attempts to prevent us from developing historical consciousness, pushing the "de-historization" of time. That is why ideologues, like Francis Fukuyama, insist that history has ended.

They try to tell us that capitalism is eternal. So, they want to perpetuate social inequality, misery, exclusion. Time is history! And ours is based on Bolívar, San Martín, Sucre, Martí, Che, Fidel, Chávez, Sandino, the struggle against slavery, against Spanish domination, against invasions and against the blockade of Cuba by genocidal imperialism.

Neoliberalism has forced the world economy to move from production to speculation. While the world Gross Domestic Product is growing at an



annual average of 1% to 2%, financial profits grows more than 5% a year. While eight hundred and twenty million people are threatened with death by hunger, twenty trillion dollars are stashed in tax havens!

Neoliberalism produces what Marx foresaw: people have no value as human being, but on the basis of the commodities they hold. This is brutal dehumanization.

Neoliberalism does not promote globalization, but global colonization. Its purpose is to make the world a great market to which only the rich have access, the rest are excluded; they are disposable beings, condemned to an early death.

Neoliberalism is based on competition, socialism on solidarity. Neoliberalism in the private accumulation of wealth; socialism in the sharing of wealth. Neoliberalism in defending the interests of capital; socialism, human rights and those of nature.

The United States and the Latin American oligarchies cannot forgive us for constructing models that are inclusive and committed to the people despite pressure and the sieges of sanctions and blockades.

We can give them the formula: We don't build models for the 1%. We don't build exclusion models. We are building solidarity models and practicing integration. (Applause)

And we are not forgiven for uniting in solidarity as Latin Americans and Caribbeans without imperial tutelage.

They do not forgive us not only for choosing to assert independence, freedom, sovereignty over our resources and self-determination, but also for demonstrating that we are capable of defending this choice.

They do not forgive Cuba for defending the philosophy of sharing in solidarity what we have, of taking health and literacy where others bring weapons, of teaching people to read and write, or restoring sight and saving the lives of those who have never had quality health services.

Now, when in some countries Cuban cooperation has been interrupted, as a result of imperialist and oligarchic conspiracies, we note with concern that millions of Latin Americans have been stripped of their human right to health. The oligarchies don't care and they bend under pressure from the pathological Yankee campaign.

The only military and security forces that interfere in the internal affairs of countries and threaten Latin America and the Caribbean are those of the United States.

Cuba will resist all threats. We have been hardened in the struggle. We have a united people. We count on the solidarity of the world, of the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, and especially of our brothers and sisters in ALBA.

We will not renounce socialism! We will not renounce solidarity! We will not renounce friendship! We will not renounce dignity! (Applause)

ALBA compañeros:

I reiterate the embrace of this noble, courageous and solidary people, in this beautiful city that has just completed 500 years of history and struggle. A city to which you can always return to receive the affection of those who do not surrender, will not surrender, and will continue the vibrant Revolution that brought us thus far.

Let us conclude as such events always do, on this historic stairway, with a celebration of life, of the future that is prepared here to make possible the better world for which so many generations have given their blood and their very lives.

We are Cuba!

And we are also Latin America and the Caribbean, all united by ALBA-TCP!

Always onward to victory!

(Ovation)

# **United We Have Won! United We Will Win!**

## **Speech at a National Assembly of People's Power Ordinary Session (December 21, 2019)**

Dear compañero Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, first secretary of our Party's Central Committee;

Compañero Esteban Lazo, President of the National Assembly and the Council of State;

Compañeros of the Historical Generation who are with us;

Deputies;

People of Cuba:

On the eve of another anniversary of the undefeated and victorious Revolution, first of all I want to exclaim: Congratulations!

We have navigated a year full of challenges, tension and aggression. We faced these united, and united we are winning.

The 61st year of the Revolution has indeed been difficult and challenging, although never as hard as those that followed the January triumph when the harassment was accompanied by vicious attacks, including: an invasion, sabotage, arson, banditry and the isolation of Cuba throughout the hemisphere.

The challenges were defeated, overcome one by one, leaving us, the protagonists, with a history that makes us deeply proud and a very formidable revolutionary lesson: by the people, with the people and for the people: anything is possible!

Steeled by all those years of resistance, and supported by the strength of the human work erected against all odds over six decades, we have been able to navigate through 2019 overcoming obstacles that appeared insurmountable, and today can rightly celebrate, without complacency and conscious that every goal met is a new starting point.

Speaking of obstacles, let us begin with the worse and most pervasive of all: the United States economic, commercial and financial blockade.

When the history of these days is written, we will need to reserve a chapter for the year 2019 because of the brutal, one could say demented way in which aggression against Cuba was escalated this year, practically, at the rate of more than a sanction per week; that is, a "turn of the screw" every seven days to asphyxiate our economy.

Cruises, flights, remittances, medical services, financing, fuel transportation and insurance were cancelled, restricted or prohibited. There was no area exempt from witch-hunting, sieges, and persecution. Nor is there any revolutionary project or action exempt from defamation.

To justify its actions, Washington has once again resorted to blatant lies, and to the crude accusation that we are promoting instability and are a threat to the region, which we have vigorously denied.

Measures adopted are aimed at sabotaging Cuba's foreign trade and hindering financial transactions with third countries, including payments, collections and credit options. They seek to deny supplies to national industry, limit access to technology and sources of capital, and cut our economic income, with specific actions against fuel shipping, tourism and international health services.

To this end, the United States has launched an intense slander campaign against the medical collaboration that Cuba provides. It is immoral and unacceptable to question the dignity, professionalism and altruism of the more than 400,000 health collaborators who, over 56 years, have participated in missions in 164 nations.

As the people know, behaving in an unprecedented manner, the United States government today boasts of having threatened, persecuted and taken illegal action against more than ten companies and dozens of vessels from third countries that transport oil to Cuba. This aggression will go down in history as cowardly piracy.

The openly stated goal is to deprive a country of 11 million people of its fuel supply. The impact was not worse thanks to the unity, conscious response and solidarity of the people; the strength of the socialist socio-economic system; and our 60 years of experience confronting imperialist aggression.

But there, in our economic results, is the impact this aggression caused. Virtually every sector was obliged to face interruptions or delays in production. We were able to prevent inconvenient power outages and endure the restrictions by taking measures tailored to particular situations, by territory and by agency. The entire country tightened its belt again, but no austerity measures were implemented that would unload the cost of the criminal blockade onto the people. We are a territory free of neoliberalism!

According to our enemies, and those who amplify their messages on whatever communication platform, the blockade is meant to harm the government. A lie! The blockade affects the entire people because it affects all economic sectors and actors.

The additional restrictions on the availability of fuel, which began in April, significantly affected public transportation, forcing a temporary halt or slowing down of some investment projects, damaging agriculture, food production and distribution, and other areas of significant economic and social impact.

The suspension of cruise ship arrivals and flights to the provinces, cuts in remittances, the closure of consular offices and limitations on travel

licenses, among others, hit the non-state sector of the economy particularly hard.

The people know this because they are suffering from it; but they have also faced the situation with greater wisdom and foresight, with that inexhaustible source of energy that exists in every Cuban: creativity and the unsurpassable capacity to find a solution to every problem. This is our history, which teaches us that unity, resistance, struggle and emancipation are key to our victories.

In the first place, thanks to this and also to the cooperation of sovereign governments and courageous business people, willing to challenge U.S. hegemony to trade with Cuba, we have faced and resisted the economic war.

And, here we are! On our feet, dignified and firm. Calm, but alert. Aware that those who go this far in their malevolence have no scruples in resorting to even more perverse plans, if they might contribute to erasing from the map this example of audacity and resistance that irritates them so much, and which they have not been able to defeat in 61 years, with neither coercion or seduction.

Exactly two years ago, at the closing of the National Assembly, Army General Raúl Castro recalled, "The Cuban Revolution has resisted the attacks of eleven United States administrations of different parties and here we are, and here we will be, free, sovereign and independent".

With the greatest pride, the present generations of leaders, of the people and, particularly, Cuban youth, present today in the Revolution, we say: Of Fidel, of Raúl and of all their comrades in struggle, we are continuity!

I know that this statement alone infuriates our adversaries, because it is the confirmation that none of their plans have worked. They have hit us hard and are hitting us. The blockade delays progress and reduces the effectiveness of our efforts. It hurts us, bothers us and irritates us, just as abuse, arrogance and wickedness hurt, bother and irritate; but it is important for them to know that we will not surrender!

The blockade is a policy so discredited, so immoral and so contrary to all rights, that its defenders go beyond all legal and human limits to maintain it, forgetting a Spanish proverb, older than Don Quixote: "The pitcher goes to the well so often that, in the end, it breaks." Proverbs, by the way, express the wisdom born from the people's experience, including their struggles.

Who knows if one day a proverb might emerge, in all languages, from the people's legendary struggle against this monster, as a universal monument to our resistance! I could imagine this proverb: "An empire that isolates ends up isolated." (Applause)

Dysfunctional and eaten up by internal corruption, the United States government has stepped up its aggressive, unilateral conduct in almost all

regions of the world, in the face of problems that are central to the future of humanity, and has exacerbated existing conflicts with total disrespect for international law and the sovereign prerogatives of many states.

In this hemisphere, the U.S. officially reaffirms the validity of the Monroe Doctrine and its actions are fully consistent with that imperialist ambition. Its political structures responsible for policy in this region seem to be dominated by elements of the Cuban-American extreme right and characters associated with the terrorist, criminal history of the United States in the region.

But not everyone is bowing down to their pressure. The United Nations General Assembly, which every year takes a position against this criminal policy, has once again condemned it in 2019, in a practically unanimous manner. In the region, only two governments distanced themselves from the world's condemnation: only Brazil voted against it, in clear submission to the empire, and Colombia abstained from voting on a resolution it has supported since 1992.

To justify this reprehensible decision, Colombian authorities resorted to unappreciative, politically motivated misrepresentation of Cuba's altruistic, devoted, discreet, unobjectionable contribution to peace in that country, a process in which the conduct of the Cuban government is universally recognized.

The aggressiveness of imperialism is reflected in its extensive, crude program of political subversion and interference in Cuba's internal affairs, to which some \$120 million of taxpayers' money has been allocated, over the past three years.

With growing activism, as has been widely reported, the U.S. embassy in Cuba is directly involved in these actions, in blatant violation of Cuban and international Law, specifically, the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

True to the historical path of the Revolution, the Cuban government has remained firm and serene in the face of this open, growing hostility.

We have refused to take the bait of provocations and remain responsibly committed to preserving formal bilateral ties and the few spaces for official cooperation that remain in place between the two countries, seeking to protect the conditions that allow for maintaining family ties of millions of citizens and communication between the two countries.

It should be emphasized, however, with absolute clarity, that Cuba will take all necessary steps to neutralize the interventionist efforts of the United States, to protect the tranquility and well-being of the population, to safeguard national unity and to defend, at whatever cost necessary, the sovereignty and independence of the country. (Applause)

We will not allow ourselves to be provoked, nor will we renounce our sacred independence. In the face of the enemy's threats, we will act as Raúl has

advocated: everyone in their neighborhood, in their community, must be on battle footing and make our own that phrase we repeated when the Comandante en jefe died: I am Fidel! (Applause)

When we look abroad, all the reasons we resist and create without wavering are confirmed. The crisis of multilateralism, so questioned at the most recent Non-Aligned Movement Summit, because of the profound imbalances it causes, and its permanent threat to peace, reveals a world where inequality is deepening and the majority is being marginalized and excluded.

Neo-liberalism, driven by the powerful media and fundamentalists of all kinds, impoverishes nations that were once prosperous. We have just seen this in Argentina, which had been saved once already from neoliberal disaster and then again became "scorched earth" in only four years of disproportionate measures, as is being documented by its intellectuals and artists, outraged by the high social debt left by the outgoing government, the great promoter of neoliberal formulas.

Under similar schemes, the Chilean model, so exalted by international financial organizations, today shows its inability to solve social problems generated by an economy designed by the Chicago Boys. Their young people, beaten and abused by the hundreds, are leading, in continuous demonstrations, an epic battle against the system that excludes them.

They demand rights that have not been seriously addressed by their government, nor do they seem to be visible to the OAS, which shows such concern for stability and democracy in Venezuela, Nicaragua and even Cuba, which has no reason to thank the "Ministry of Colonies," to which we fortunately ceased to belong, more than 50 years ago.

We reaffirm that we will maintain solidarity and cooperation with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, its legitimate government under the Presidency of Nicolás Maduro Moros, and with the Sandinista government and people, led by President Daniel Ortega.

Let this be a reminder to those who put on anti-Cuban shows with the grotesque OAS Secretary General at center stage.

Another outrageous, unacceptable episode that 2019 brought was the coup against President Evo Morales Ayma in Bolivia, carried out by the local oligarchy under Yankee guidance, with the scandalous complicity of the OAS.

The deeply racist coup plotters repeat the formula tried in Venezuela of self-proclaimed authorities. It no longer matters that the OAS report (on the elections) was a lie, and that there were never any violations or fraud on the part of MAS. Its leaders are now refugees in other countries, persecuted by the real criminals: those who took power with the Bible in one hand and a gun in the other.

Since the very beginnings of the coup, Cuba has condemned it. We reaffirm here today our solidarity with compañero Evo Morales Ayma and the Bolivian people. (Applause)

To the foreign attempts to destabilize the Caribbean States of Dominica and Suriname, we respond that Cuba's solidarity with both governments and peoples is solid and firm.

In this bitter context, hopeful processes have emerged in Mexico and Argentina. Neither of these has set out to build socialism or nationalize the economy, and yet the war against their social policies has already begun, using the pretext of Marxist influence.

We reaffirm our affinity and solidarity with the government of Andrés Manuel López Obrador in Mexico, and applaud the election of Alberto Fernández and Cristina Fernández as President and Vice-President of Argentina. (Applause) We insist on the recognition of Lula's innocence and the restitution of his political rights. His full freedom must therefore be demanded.

In Mexico and Argentina, during the last year, we have witnessed the resurgence of our dreams of integration and the idea of preserving CELAC, diverse and plural, which managed to establish in our country, in 2014, more than a Proclamation, the shared intention to be forever a Zone of Peace.

Our ties with Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Middle East are being consolidated. Our political relations and high-level exchanges with the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam have been strengthened.

It has been a positive year in terms of ties with the European Union and its member states in different areas, including economic trade, investment and cooperation.

Cuba's participation in the XVIII Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Baku, Azerbaijan, was active and productive. We reiterate the importance of the Movement playing an increasingly vigorous international role, in addressing together the great challenges imposed on countries of the South.

Compañeras and compañeros:

We have outlined the international political situation, aggravated by the aforementioned crisis of multilateralism and the high level of U.S. interference in our region.

In this context, full of dangers and threats, the modest performance of the Cuban economy is no exception. The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) confirmed that the general slowdown in Latin America and the Caribbean persists, with a growth rate of 0.1% expected, and announced that it will be low in 2020, with an



estimated rate of 1.3%, in an international context characterized by worsening trade tensions, among other factors. These rates are the basis for Cuba's economic performance in 2019, with its 0.5% growth, and the forecast for 2020, which is a realistic 1%.

We are no exception. What is truly exceptional is that our economy has not declined under the weight of the enormous pressures and financial persecution that has been exacerbated this year to an unprecedented degree.

What is also exceptional is that we have not resorted to easy neo-liberal formulas that are back in style, even though it is more than proven that they only serve to widen the gap between the few, very few, increasingly rich and rapidly impoverished majorities.

Let me recall that at the height of neoliberalism, in the 1990s, Fidel "went to the future and came back to tell it", as they say about his powerful foresight. In the context of an Ibero-American Summit, in 1993, our historic leader warned:

"Neoliberalism has no future and the time will come when all this will begin to be questioned, but time must pass and, in the meantime, we must be there fighting the most just causes, for the most correct ideas, raising consciousness. It is very important that the people become aware, and the people will become aware to the extent that they see that these formulas do not solve their problems."

When Fidel expressed that criticism in advance, the system's theorists were determined to convince us that capitalism was the end of history. Today we could say that we are witnessing the end of the history of capitalism. All we see is a repetition of formulas that have already proven to be ineffective and, what is worse, in spite of their high social cost.

No, thank you, we do not want that for our people. We want prosperity and we are going to fight for it with all our might; but never at the cost of leaving the majority out of any benefit.

We are not interested in a society, as we have seen so many out there, where the lights that advertise progress overshadow the stars in the sky, while hundreds of people sleep in parks and dozens of children throw themselves onto air-conditioned vehicles to clean the windows of their well-to-do passengers, men and women who think they can ease their consciences by throwing them a few coins for food.

We want decency, beauty, good taste and a culture of detail to reign in our cities and for the best productive practices to make our fields flourish. We want honest work and efficiency to win the war against illegality, bureaucracy, accommodation, inertia and apathy.

Cubans are winners of the impossible. And this is a good time to propose another year of positive exceptionality.

Looking at highlights of the year that is ending, we ourselves are surprised by the leap taken over difficulties:

To begin 2019, a devastating tornado severely damaged homes and workplaces in five municipalities of the capital. That early morning of January 28, in the darkness, amidst the rubble, few believed that it would be possible to heal the deep wounds and complete construction and beautification plans for Havana's 500th anniversary.

A real tornado of work, effort, solidarity and collective intelligence, in a few months, erased nature's blow, setting records in finishing investments projects.

This contributed to the surpassed goal that most encourages us, at the end of the approved Housing Policy's first year of implementation. With homeowners' efforts, subsidies and state funding, 43,700 dwellings were completed, 10,000 more than planned, a real inspiration for coming years, when we aspire to complete more than 60,000 annually. Only in this way, and under new concepts of functionality, quality and harmony with the environment, will we, one day, be able to solve accumulated problems in housing.

2019 was also the year we began to see results from greater investment in highway and rail transportation. Eighty new cars were put into operation in the national railroad system, which was accompanied by improved quality of these services, as well as the rehabilitation of the main railway stations.

More than 300 buses assembled in Cuba, 69 semi-buses and 125 motor-tricycles were added to public transportation, while progress was made in the repair of buses that had been out of service for some time, bringing some relief to one of the country's most acute problems, which will continue to demand resources and efficiency.

Workers in the budgeted sector will surely remember that in 2019 their salaries were raised up to three times, which favored, among other things, the return of 12,942 teachers to classrooms, allowing for 96.9% coverage without the use of alternatives.

Tomorrow is Educator's Day. Congratulations and recognition for the contributions made by Cuban teachers on that day.

Without yet reaching the salary reform, the increase raised the real value of state sector workers' income, and to a lesser degree, social security benefits, a demand postponed for years, in the expectation of an improved economy, which is still pending.

This was the year in which telephone service and Internet access were extended and diversified, beginning as one of the world's last-placed countries in this arena, to become one of those with the most growth in internet connections.

Seven million, three hundred thousand telephone lines, 6 million of these for mobile phones and more than 3 million 3G and 4G users, speak to the great progress made in reaching our goal of greater computerization of society.

Tourism merits a separate paragraph, being the sector most affected by the tightening of the blockade - along with medical services - which managed to surpass four million visitors, open 3,855 new hotel rooms and advance in building ties with national production, foreign investment and the non-state sector, aspects which require more work, given their impact on the national economy, along with continuous improvement of quality.

In the Mariel Special Development Zone, industrial plants are already operating and manufacturing Cuban products needed for our domestic market and with export potential.

But most important this year, for this legislature and all citizens, was the approval of our new Constitution, which strengthens Cuban society and opens new paths to the institutionalization of the country.

Six laws have emerged from its implementation in two sessions, in an unprecedented legislative exercise that today leaves us with the legal instruments needed for better functioning of the National Assembly itself, municipal assemblies and People's Councils, as well as with new figures and forms of government work, which should lead to the improvement of People's Power bodies, which cannot be postponed.

In this parliamentary session we have elected for the first time, in recent years, a Prime Minister and also the new Council of Ministers. We can assure you that compañero Manuel Marrero Cruz, deputy prime ministers and appointed ministers will give their all, providing continuity to the inspirational work of running the government with the people and for the people.

We were advancing in this dynamic of work, addressing the most pressing needs and demands of the population, when the imperial escalation deprived us of more than 50% of our fuel needs, beginning in September.

The "conjuncture" arrived, a period that required all our strength to avoid negative effects and setbacks. Jokes and memes were created on social media that will make the list of the nation's most powerful strengths: the ability to joke about even our most serious problems. Even those of us who used the word initially to mitigate fear caused by malicious rumors that the most difficult moments of the Special Period would return, relieved the anguish at crowded bus stops, during closings and long lines at gas stations, production shutdowns and all the associated problems, laughing when there was no other way out.

That was one more fight we won, but not totally. (Applause) The "conjuncture" forced us to search our experience in the worst times for saving practices that had been shelved, but as soon as the most difficult

crisis moment passed, some state car drivers have gone back to rolling up their the windows and forgetting about solidarity. There are measures that cannot be circumstantial. We must enforce them until the routine becomes habitual. Like all forms of conservation and all practices of solidarity.

This is a decision. It is not a request. This is a stipulation that I am making on behalf of the government and the needs of the majority. (Applause) And we will demand compliance because it is a mandate from the people.

The good thing about bad times is that they educate us in better practices. And the education and culture acquired in 60 years of Revolution must serve us well, that moral wealth that no material treasure can replace or surpass.

I have mentioned only some of the most notable facts related to the government's activity during the year, because of their impact on the entire population and because reports by our ministers of Economy and Finance have provided the essential details.

Other data and results, by agency, will be published on the Presidency's website and we hope they will be shared on social networks. There is indeed much to be proud of, as there is still much to be resolved. The most pressing issue is that of monetary re-ordering.

We have not forgotten what the Army General said on the subject two years ago:

"No one can calculate, not even the wisest of us, the high cost to the state sector of the persistence of the dual currency and exchange rate, which favors an unjust inverted pyramid, where the greater the responsibility, the lower the pay, and not all able citizens are motivated to work legally, while at the same time discouraging the promotion to higher positions of the best and most capable workers and cadres, some of whom move to the non-state sector.

"I must admit that this issue has taken too long and its solution cannot be delayed any longer."

We have the duty to transform the applause that accompanied his words, at that time, into efforts to meet deadlines.

We can assure you that the monetary re-ordering is in an advanced stage of study and approval. Efforts are currently concentrated on the comprehensive validation of results on each subject; the elaboration of legal norms; the organization and execution of training processes; political assurance and social communication.

The far-reaching nature of the process and its complexity has been confirmed, since it includes closely interrelated aspects that will have an impact on the entire society, which will be addressed in the planned sequence, minimizing effects on the population.

This process is not just a currency exchange, so I reiterate what I have said on previous occasions that bank deposits in foreign currencies, convertible pesos, Cuban pesos, as well as cash in the hands of the population, will be protected.

All related measures will be reported to our people in a timely fashion.

Compañeros and compañeras:

We have set ourselves three priorities to face the attacks of our adversary without giving up our development programs. The first is ideological and is directly related to our defense, to our deepest convictions. The Cuban people, shaped and trained by Fidel in legendary battles, is prepared to understand and assume any problems posed by the enemy's aggression. They only need to be informed and receive explanations in a timely manner.

We demonstrated this when we reported the situation created with the availability of fuel and called for turning an attack by the enemy into an opportunity to unleash creativity and recover knowledge from other times.

Strengthening ourselves ideologically means turning resistance into learning, and that learning into emancipatory solutions, while freeing ourselves from old dependencies and ties to obsolete work methods.

When we advocate thinking as a country and thinking differently, we are calling for creativity. Cuba is a people of creators. What has our long resistance been if not a perpetual act of creation?

Another priority is the economic battle. And note that I do not say the second battle, I say "another priority", because they all have importance.

The enemy has made the Cuban economy the first target to be destroyed. Not only because this is the path to the destruction of the Revolution, but also because it is a way to show that socialism is not a viable system. And every minute of resistance to their aggression is saying just the opposite: that only socialism makes possible the miracle of a small nation defeating a powerful empire that has not been able to subjugate it.

But we are not only interested in resisting. We conquered that merit long ago. The challenge, amidst this very war, is to conquer the greatest possible prosperity. To that end, we need greater, more diverse and better quality production, with the added value of science and chains that should enable us to reduce imports and increase exports, within a sustainable project that is at the level of scientific knowledge and the proven skills of the Cuban people. With such conviction we will defend the 2020 Economic and Budget Plans approved in this session.

Along with these priorities is the legislative work, in accordance with the schedule also approved in this Assembly.

Over the coming months and years, we must adopt new laws and prepare to legislate on issues that are highly sensitive, including some that have

been a source of concern for many people, related to gender violence, racism, animal abuse and sexual diversity.

All four are being addressed and monitored to reinforce and strengthen the law, but without giving any space to confrontation and division, which exogenous forces promote in an attempt to interfere in matters that are sacred to our national sensibilities.

The Cuban government, born of the Revolution that freed women from domestic slavery, that made all citizens equal, that punishes and condemns violence in all forms, knows and shares the dissatisfaction of sectors of the population affected by the vestiges of abuse that survive in their midst, despite official policies directed toward the conquest of "all justice", as Martí advocated.

What we must not lose sight of is that we will only reach that total justice as we have reached it, despite the worst omens and gales; with unity and in unity.

It is not by dividing society, by accusing others, seeking what divides us, that we will be able to settle our debts to what is most just for all: United we have won! United we will win! (Applause)

We have recently approved a government program to confront racial discrimination. That is the spirit that encourages us as we prepare to face a new year with the certainty that this one leaves us: Together everything is possible! A society where women have climbed in 60 years from the darkest corner of the house to the podium of the country's professional majority; a mixed-race nation, in which we are all so light that we look white and so dark that we look black, as Don Fernando Ortiz would say; a people so sensitive that we believe in life and exalt it every day, with all the conditions to confront and definitively resolve any vestige of mistreatment, exclusion, discrimination or submission that has survived the Revolution's work for social justice. And we will do it! (Applause)

This is how we see the progress of our society in equally profound, though less tangible, areas. I am referring to spirituality in all its dimensions, to the need to grow in strengthening the values that should distinguish a society like ours. And in the eradication of attitudes that are contrary to the morals of the society in which we see ourselves.

The Army General has commented more than once how, in the school where he was educated as a child, he was taught an exercise of self-critical introspection that he still practices after all these years: to consider, at the end of every day, what he had done that was good and useful, and what was not.

In **La Edad de Oro**, Martí wrote that not a day should go by without doing a good deed, a fundamental educational principle of the Colmenita (children's theater company) which we admire so much.

It is not only for children that this recommendation is made. It is for all ages and all citizens. The beautiful society we owe ourselves will come sooner to the degree that we demand civic behavior as an obligation.

To give a couple of examples: What is the value of works completed for Havana's 500th anniversary that have adorned the capital, if the city's hygiene disappears again below mountains of garbage, and neither those who are responsible for removing it - or those who live with these practices at their own doorstep - are duly sanctioned?

And another example: What is the use of controls, audits, severe sanctions, when as soon as the law is applied, we begin to see the offender as a victim?

Paternalism is another of those vices that undermine the speed and depth of our progress. During the debates in standing committees, the abusive practices of those who complicate and negotiate with the simplest procedures were discussed more than once. But, what a job we have on our hands, to generalize moral sanctions, denunciation, the refusal to be bribed or bribe.

I have extended my reflections on these issues because those of us here we almost all responsible, not only for making and approving laws, but for enforcing them, as well. And it is our duty to turn them into living words. (Applause)

There is much to be said and done, but we also need to take the time to celebrate the year that is coming to an end, full of tension and challenges, but just as much, full of victories.

Let us live the next days and hours as if the Revolution were triumphing again. The Revolution triumphs every time we snatch a victory for our cause from the empire. And in 2019 we did it many times.

May our urban and rural squares be filled with music and joy.

There is every reason to celebrate. In the 61st year of the Revolution, they threw us to our death and we are alive. Alive, celebrating and determined to continue winning.

Homeland or Death!

Socialism or Death!

Veneceremos!

# **May Cuban Foreign Policy Continue To Be A Diplomacy Of "Homeland Or Death!"**

## **Speech at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary (December 23, 2019)**

Compañero José Ramón Machado Ventura, second secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee;

Compañero Esteban Lazo Hernández, Political Bureau member and President of the National Assembly of People's Power and the Council of State;

Compañero Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Political Bureau member and Minister of Foreign Affairs;

Admired and beloved founders and officials of long standing;

Compañeras and compañeros:

I am pleased to assume the duty of speaking to you on the day that the 60th anniversary of Cuban revolutionary diplomacy is officially celebrated. Congratulations! (Applause)

We are united with Minrex by close ties and a history full of reasons to be proud of being Cuban, which began well before December 23, 1959.

Revolutionary diplomacy is, without a doubt, a well established fact, which has shone in the ideas and voice of Fidel since the initial days of the victory and his first trips abroad. In Caracas, barely 23 days after the triumph of the Revolution, the young leader was already talking about the need for Latin American integration:

"...How long are we going to be defenseless pieces of a continent whose liberator conceived as something more dignified, greater? How long are Latin Americans going to be living in this petty, ridiculous atmosphere? How long are we going to remain divided? How long are we going to be victims of powerful interests that attack all of our peoples? When are we going to raise the great slogan of union? The slogan of unity within nations is raised; why is the slogan of unity of nations not also raised?

In Washington, only four months after descending from the mountains, his ethics and defense of national sovereignty, his call for a relationship of equals impressed journalists, when he told them that if they were accustomed to seeing representatives of other governments come to ask for money, he was not. And he clarified: I come only to attempt to reach a better understanding with the U.S. people. We need better relations between Cuba and the United States.

Just a few days later, in Buenos Aires, at the meeting of the 21, he proposed a principle that you have emphasized a great deal on this anniversary of Minrex: the diplomacy of the people. He improvised a speech there that no



veteran of another governments represented could surpass: "I am a new man here at this type of meeting; we are, moreover, in our homeland, a new government and perhaps that is why we are also bringing fresh ideas and beliefs from the people, since we still feel like the people, we speak here as a people, and as a people living an exceptional moment in its history, as a people full of confidence in our own destiny. I come to speak here, with the confidence of the people and with the frankness of the people."

On behalf of the people, or rather of the peoples, Fidel suggested, on that occasion, that an investment of 30 billion would be required over 10 years, to solve Latin America's economic problems. And he indentified the United States as responsible for that investment.

It is impossible not to notice, in this challenge to the empire, a glimpse of what would become Cuba's legendary battle against foreign debt, the FTAA, imperialist hegemony in the region, and the unjust international economic order.

Looking back at this history as the anniversary approaches, I find it impossible to summarize the essentials in a speech. I believe, however, that a work so transcendent deserves to be told, based on our learning, on how we have come to respect and love it.

I spoke earlier of the day on which the 60th anniversary of Minrex is officially celebrated, thinking about previous events, about those foundational moments that mark the appearance of Fidel as a creator, and Cuba as the protagonist of new political thought on the international stage.

As friends of Cuba have said more than once, a small Caribbean nation was coming to the forefront of world politics, based on the power of truth and ideas. With such a preamble, transforming everything was key. The legendary Raúl Roa arrived to head the Foreign Ministry in June, as a brilliant interpreter of this idea, and Minrex was born in December.

Roa, the grandson of Mambis and a prominent member of the glorious, anti-imperialist generation of the 1930s, had been Cuba's ambassador to the OAS, where he expressed without "warmth" the Cuban people's profound distrust of that organization and warned: The diplomacy of the Cuban Revolution has duties and responsibilities consistent with its democratic nature, continental projection and universal transcendence.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the work of the Revolution, changed the name of the former Ministry of State, an imitation of its powerful neighbor. And everything was changed: concepts, structures, composition and ways of working. The fight between David and Goliath was beginning, and Minrex opened its arms to the new diplomats of the people it proudly represented.

It has been said many times that this institution was not founded by career diplomats, but by diplomats on the run. Those men and women, however,

most of them very young, had the best of diplomas: that of revolutionaries, patriots, committed to the ideas of Martí and Fidel to the core.

They say that the arrival of Rebel Army combatants, and members of revolutionary organizations that had fought against the dictatorship, to the Ministry, its embassies and missions, along with the first experiences of training cadres at a very early stage, allowed Minrex, from then on, to be staffed by people with absolute loyalty to the Revolution and to Fidel.

I know that several of those among that first batch are still active and have contributed, with their experience, to training the youngest. It is not difficult to see that today several generations of cadres, officials and workers in general live together at Minrex, from those who joined at the beginning to the youngest, born well into the Revolution, who are destined to ensure essential continuity.

The newest inherit a history of dedication and tremendous heroism. Some of this has been documented and published over the years, but there will always be more to say about the courageous response to aggression against our embassies and missions; about the constant struggle against the enemy's lies and slanders; and about how, over 60 years, a great network of solidarity was forged between peoples of the world and a small nation that the empire hoped to isolate, so that its example would not spread. And, as we said a few days ago before the Assembly, it is the empire that is going to end up isolated.

Roa himself said this when the United States orchestrated the suspension of Cuba's rights in the OAS at a meeting of foreign ministers in San José, Costa Rica. Who is not still moved by the historical image of his withdrawal from the room, exclaiming energetically: "I am going with my people and, also going with me are all the peoples of America!" Many say this was where he was first called the Chancellor of Dignity. What an honorable and expressive title for the work we are celebrating today!

Along with permanent homage to their memory, their fidelity, their brilliant courage in defense of the principles of the Revolution, today we must also pay tribute to the martyrs of Cuba's Foreign Service, who in different latitudes fell in defense of the homeland and the Revolution.

Recently, in Argentina, our delegation attended the inauguration of President Alberto Fernández and Vice President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. There, we paid tribute to the two heroic young diplomats, whose names are inscribed on the memorial to the 30,000 disappeared, victims of state terrorism during the dictatorship in that sister country.

For years, we had no way of knowing what is known today about the brutal way in which Jesús Cejas and Crescencio Galañena were murdered, after being interrogated and tortured by terrorists of Cuban origin sent by the CIA, as part of the sinister Operation Condor.

To Minrex workers, I would like to say now that the flowers we placed alongside the Argentinean memorial were also a tribute to the long list of all those who, over the years, faced, without fear, all kinds of threats and aggression for their firm commitment to the revolutionary ideal of the Cuban people.

Since the first day of the Revolution, different U.S. administrations have worked to make a reality of their stated goal of restoring Cuba's neocolonial and dependent past.

Sometimes with a stick and sometimes a carrot, they have tried everything: from aggression to seduction. That is why, since its creation, Minrex has had as one of its principal missions confronting U.S. policy toward Cuba, not only on the diplomatic plane, but especially in this way.

The battles against the blockade in the UN General Assembly and against attempts to condemn our country in the Commission on Human Rights are prime examples along this hard road.

You have played a central role in the effort to prevent Cuba's isolation and to broaden, deepen and extend our relations with the rest of the world.

As a result of this effort, evidence of the prestige gained by the Revolution in its practice of Marti's principle that "Homeland is Humanity," Cuba, which in 1958 maintained relations with little more than 50 nations, today maintains diplomatic ties with 197 countries and international institutions.

Minrex, with 128 embassies and permanent missions and 20 consulates, works to maintain and develop political and economic ties with friendly nations, and to assist Cubans living abroad, among many other tasks.

We are honored to recognize that this Ministry and its members enjoy respect, prestige and authority, even among our ideological adversaries, and have become the first trench of the Cuban Revolution in all regions, contributing, in the very first place, to our people's response to imperialist attempts to destroy the nation.

You are the daily bearers of Cuba's unwavering solidarity with our brothers in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and the entire Third World, in the struggle of their peoples against imperialism, neo-colonialism and neo-liberalism. And you have played an important role in denouncing the policies of the United States against sister nations, particularly now, in the face of new attempts to implement the Monroe Doctrine in our region.

True to the promise of compañero Fidel and the historic line of the Revolution, Minrex has made a contribution to our ongoing support of the Venezuelan people and government, in the face of constant imperialist attack, and in solidarity with the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua, facing attempts to destabilize the country, promoted from Washington.

You have also been true to another of the Revolution's principles, in relations with countries of the Caribbean, our most immediate

environment, in cooperation, education, health, confronting hurricane damage, the fight against climate change which, although it affects all of humanity, makes small island countries, such as those in the Caribbean, the target of increasingly frequent and destructive weather phenomena, and in denouncing discriminatory and coercive policies affecting their economies.

Puerto Rico and its struggle for independence have always been a priority of our country's foreign policy and its diplomacy, which has worked successfully to have this right recognized at the United Nations, despite United States manipulations.

Under the leadership of Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, our revolutionary diplomacy contributed decisively to the creation of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, CELAC, and to the approval of the proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, signed by heads of state and government of the countries of Our America at the Second CELAC Summit in Havana.

The holding of two Summits of the Non-Aligned Movement, at different historical moments, under extremely difficult circumstances, provide further evidence of Cuba's role in the struggle by countries of the South to achieve true independence.

Governments and foreign ministries throughout the world recognize the seriousness, professionalism and hospitality of Cubans at every conference or summit held in our country. Minrex leaders, officials and staff also have the merit of distinguishing themselves for their active participation in the Non-Aligned Movement, the Summit of the South, the Group of 77, ALBA and the Association of Caribbean States, just to mention a few.

The role of our diplomats in Havana and other latitudes, together with numerous institutions, was fundamental to the great battle led by our Comandante en jefe against foreign debt, which has widespread impact on the continent and is fully relevant today in light of the neoliberal escalation in countries of the region.

How can we not recognize the performance of the Minrex in the battle for the return to Cuba of the boy Elián González, which became a serious defeat for the worst elements of the counterrevolution established in the United States, and in the fight against anti-Cuban terrorism, and for the extradition of Posada Carriles and his cronies, who attempted to assassinate the Comandante de la Revolución on several occasions.

Minrex and its embassies also played an important role in mobilizing international solidarity on a global scale in the battle for the return to Cuba of our Five heroes.

The fight against the blockade deserves special mention. The achievement of increasingly massive, sustained support for the draft resolution that Cuba has presented to the United Nations General Assembly, for almost three

decades, is a demonstration of tenacity and constancy, of the vote-by-vote struggle against U.S. attempts to prevent the condemnation of its genocidal policy, resorting to pressure, coercion and lies.

The retelling of six decades of revolutionary diplomacy has necessarily been a long effort that will always remain incomplete, so closely tied to the Revolution's 60 years of incessant, victorious battles. But surely there are also problems to be solved and achievements to surpass.

Minrex has responded to what our people expected in the battle against imperialism, neocolonialism and neoliberalism in all latitudes. From the United Nations to the farthest reaches of the planet, the voice of Cuba has been heard.

Our diplomacy has always been present in the struggle of African peoples for their independence and development; in solidarity with the Palestinian and Saharan peoples, who are fighting for independent, sovereign states, and with the Syrian Arab Republic, whose independence and territorial integrity are threatened; maintaining relations with the beloved Socialist Republic of Vietnam, since the times when it was struggling to confront imperialist aggression and reunify the country; and developing fruitful political and economic ties with the People's Republic of China.

Very high-level relations have been established with Russia, and with the European Union, despite the persistence of differences, progress is being made in establishing mechanisms of collaboration without interference and with full respect for Cuban sovereignty.

Relations with the United States, whose hostility and aggressiveness have been at the center, from the very beginning of the Revolution, of battles we have fought together, deserve special mention.

The historic participation and memorable speech of Army General Raul Castro Ruz at the Seventh Summit of the Americas, in April of 2015, marked a milestone in the Revolution's foreign policy.

During the brief period when diplomatic relations were re-established and the United States recognized that its policies toward Cuba had failed, following the Army General's indications, progress was made on a number of cooperation agreements, and negotiations began on others.

Today, as threats continue and the blockade is tightened, when hatred for the Cuban Revolution and its example is intensified, it is up to you, together with our entire people, to contribute to a more decisive confrontation for the preservation of our sovereignty and independence.

Compañeras and compañeros:

We were talking at the beginning of this speech about the first experiences of the Ministry in training new generations of diplomats. That initial effort has been transformed, over the years, into a prestigious university-level Institute of International Relations, where students receive a

comprehensive, academic, revolutionary education. In them, in the quality of their preparation and the depth of their commitment, we see the continuity of Minrex.

We know that ties between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the academic world were broadened with the creation, nine years ago, of the Center for International Policy Research (CIPI), which has allowed for the multiplication of views on world events, with a positive impact on the shaping of policies and strategies.

We also wish to acknowledge the work of Esti (Center for Translation and Interpretation) incorporated into Minrex seven years ago, and that of translators and interpreters at Esti, whose role has been very valuable not only within the country, during events of all kinds, but also in accompanying our leaders on visits abroad, since the very beginning of the Revolution.

At the same time, the Ministry has made progress in its institutionalization. A broad, precise regulatory framework is in place, and a proposed Foreign Service law has been drafted, which will soon be debated by the National Assembly of People's Power.

On our visits to other countries, in daily relations with personnel working in this institution, we have learned to be aware of and value their indispensable contribution to Cuban state policy, and we have also insisted on the need to give those in our headquarters abroad a greater role in the country's economic battle to increase foreign investment and cooperation, and to strengthen ties with the Cuban community abroad.

We have met with Cuban officials and diplomatic workers on every visit we make to another nation, to talk to them about life in the country and to explain the complexity of the moment we are living. Thanks to them, we have returned to the homeland with the feeling of having been there too, even though we were far away.

In these six decades of revolutionary diplomatic work, Minrex officials and staff have made a reality of the words expressed by Army General Raul Castro Ruz, at the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly, when he said, "The international community can always count on Cuba's sincere voice in the face of injustice, inequality, underdevelopment, discrimination and manipulation; and for the establishment of a more just and equitable international order, in which human beings, their dignity and well-being, are truly at the center."

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be proud to reach this anniversary, with its principal missions accomplished and with the satisfaction of never failed the founding principles of this institution, which constitute the epicenter of Cuban foreign policy, and which reflect the thinking of the Comandante en jefe, on December 23, 1959, when he officially created this organization.

Challenging days are coming, in an increasingly complex scenario with the growing aggressiveness of imperialism, but we are certain that you will always be able to overcome the obstacles and face the dangers, with the inspiration provided by the beautiful history that precedes you.

I congratulate you all and embrace you with deep affection and the recognition you have earned from the government and our people, for your efforts and results.

I urge you to continue working with the same creativity, courage and tenacity for the increasingly successful implementation of our country's foreign policy, whose true creator is Fidel and whose main protagonist is the people, of whom you are a part, and to whom we are all indebted.

There is a phrase of Roa's, among many of his that could be recalled in this celebration, that in my opinion synthesizes revolutionary diplomacy, as it summarizes in a few words the roots and projection of his work. Roa said,

"...The revolution made by the people, on the arm of Fidel Castro, is as Cuban as the Sierra Maestra, as American as the Andes and as universal as the highest human values it embodies ... it was born during a century, in the very entrails of the Cuban people, and it is crowning, over time, Martí's truncated enterprise. Hence his links with Bolívar and Juárez, his openness to new currents in ideas and aspirations that feed the living body of history."

Keep making history! May Cuban foreign policy - the daughter of the diplomacy of the Mambi insurrection and the Revolution of the 30s, consecrated in January of 1959 and based on Martí and Fidel's ethical principles of anti-imperialism, solidarity and internationalism - continue to be a diplomacy of Homeland or Death! Always onward to victory! (Prolonged applause)

# **Martí With Me And With Us**

**Article released on Granma (February 24, 2020)**

With pleasure I have read dozens of messages posted on the Presidency's website, regarding the January call to pay just tribute to the most universal of Cubans. Some of these are so beautiful they make you want to reproduce them as graffiti.

Although only names or pseudonyms are written, no professions or ages, it is very comforting to note that, in addition to numerous well-known followers of Martí, the majority are educators and young people interested in making their feelings about Martí public.

Ela, an early childhood teacher, has written that she was very moved when she talked about Martí with children in the fifth year of life, and they immediately, spontaneously ran to embrace and kiss the bust, where they place flowers every morning.

Enrique, a young professional, proudly recounts that, as a child, he played the part of Martí in a parade in his hometown, Placetas, and that when he graduated from the University he carried the Cuban flag to the top of Turquino Peak to pay tribute to him.

As Yamaris Pedraza states, "Every Cuban has a Martí inside, we have all read and performed his works, his thoughts."

And how are Martí's thoughts illuminating us! I have friends with good memories who constantly quote him to prove that he talked about everything, that he touched on every subject, and that in his writings we can find answers to the most difficult questions. Our schools could organize contests to find statements by Martí that are useful to human growth. You would see what a source of ethical values would flood them.

I once heard Pedro Pablo Rodríguez, director of the critical edition of his Complete Works, say that the man who lived only 42 years, left a truly infinite legacy. So frequently and constantly do new things appear in relation to Martí that his work seems to never end.

This work, and that generated by its study in Cuba and around the world, is already on social media, where young people share it and understand, in the end, that there is a great deal of Martí to be learned within his prose and verse that fascinate them. They discover with emotion that he is not a man of the last century but of all centuries.

But is this Martí? Many ask, amazed at the extraordinary validity of his statements and the universality of the issues he addressed.

When the newest - be they children or youth - discover that the man of the Golden Age also wrote wonderful things for adults, about the world order and the dangers that still beset us, it becomes impossible for them to escape from the need to turn to him. If they find him and delve into his



essence, nothing can separate them from the charms of his words. And they become invincible.

Nonetheless, as Martí himself said in the Cuban Revolutionary Party's manifesto to Cuba: "The homeland is sacred, and those who love it disinterested, tirelessly, owe it the whole truth."

I do not want to exaggerate, nor can I. Martí is not yet as we would like him to be, and as he needs to be, to enrich the souls of our children and our children's children. We continue and will continue to need Martí, always. And it is our responsibility to teach him, wisely and lovingly, as only good parents and good teachers can.

A blow from the depths of hatred recently shook our consciences in relation to the pernicious routine that allows us to forget care of Martí's busts. Not the physical works that have accompanied us since childhood, but their integrity, what they symbolize.

Subsequent events came along to show us what it means to be with Martí, on the side of those who love and found. Or against Martí, on the side of those who hate and destroy.

Today is February 24; 125 years have passed since the beginning of the most noble of wars. The one Martí organized and led, defining it as "a complete, humanitarian war, in which the people of Cuba, invincible and indivisible, are even more united."

In the Montecristi Manifesto, Martí and Gomez invoked, "as a guide and support for our people," Cuba's "magnanimous founders, whose work renews the grateful country, and honor, which prevents Cubans from wounding, in word or deed, those who die for them."

It was March 25, 1895, on the eve of the long journey that would bring them back to the homeland, where veteran patriots and a new generation were already fighting for independence, who only Martí could move and bring together with his enormous faith "in human improvement and the usefulness of virtue." This faith sustains our legendary resistance. Let us all take care of it by going deeply into Martí.

# **Letter To The UN General Secretary**

**Letter sent to the UN General Secretary (June 26, 2020)**

Your Excellency Mr. Antonio Guterres

United Nations Secretary-General New York

Your Excellency:

Seventy-five years after the member states of this organization signed the United Nations Charter, strict adherence to its purposes and principles, to international law and the preservation of multilateralism are more important than ever.

We are facing multiple crises as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with devastating effects, visible in all spheres of society, expected to last and aggravate pending global challenges.

The international panorama is increasingly complex. Conflicts and the arms race are proliferating. Non-conventional wars for the purpose of domination, acts of aggression, unilateral coercive measures, the manipulation and politicization of human rights and disrespect for the self-determination of peoples are intensifying. Multilateralism is attacked, international agreements ignored and the role of organizations such as the UN and the World Health Organization is discounted.

At the same time, the current unjust international economic order deepens inequality and underdevelopment; while increasing poverty, hunger, marginalization and limited access to essential services, such as health care.

The moment and common sense demand that the international community set aside political differences and seek joint solutions to global problems through international cooperation.

It is the duty of all to keep the commitments we made when we signed the UN Charter, which continues to be an enduring, universal and indispensable basis for promoting a just, democratic and equitable international order that responds to the demands of the peoples of the world for peace, development and justice, and contributes to meeting the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

I take advantage of the opportunity to reiterate, to your Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration and esteem.

Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez

President of the Republic of Cuba

# **Nothing Is More Valuable In The Cuban Revolution Than A Person's Life**

## **Speech at an International Labor Organization Summit (July 8, 2020)**

Mr. Director General;

Excellencies, Heads of State and Government;

I feel honored to bring to this virtual Summit the voice of Cuba, a small developing country, where workers in power struggle on a daily basis to achieve all justice, which was the dream and a commitment of the founding fathers of our nation.

Today, as has been always the case throughout the last 61 years, Cuba is sharing the serious new challenges facing the International Labor Organization as it enters the second century of its existence.

The impact of COVID-19 adds to the challenges that the world of work was already facing, under the harsh rules of the market, which will undeniably have devastating consequences on the crises generated by this pandemic in all countries' economies.

Unemployment has increased several times over. Lack of social protection is on the rise, as are inequality and poverty.

But we should not deceive ourselves. The terrible impact and nefarious consequences of the pandemic around the world are not only a result of this lethal virus. Years of neoliberal policies and savage capitalism, subject to market laws, are the root cause of the serious global situation.

According to experts, 305 million jobs have already been lost and the livelihoods of 1.6 billion workers are jeopardized. Hundreds of millions of persons will soon be joining the ranks of those who are already suffering the inequalities of an unjust international economic order, and whose survival is certainly at stake.

These times are extremely serious and demand concerted action. No government, worker, or employer, can afford to stand by doing nothing. The colossal endeavor we must undertake demands solutions in the greater interest of workers' rights.

Those who create jobs, particularly small and medium producers, will also require assistance.

It is imperative to consolidate social dialogue in the process of defining and implementing policies to confront and recover from the pandemic.

Mr. Director General:

Cuba, a small nation that has been coping with the COVID-19 pandemic, is suffering the brutal, opportunistic tightening of the economic, commercial

and financial blockade policy imposed by the United States, intended to severely limit our trade and access to fuel and hard currency.

Despite the ever-growing worldwide call to end it, the blockade imposed on Cuba has not only been maintained since this epidemiological threat struck the entire planet, but has escalated its criminal harassment of an entire people, viciously punishing all Cuban families.

Amidst this suffocating economic warfare, our government has implemented actions to protect the health of an entire people; maintain employment rates and defend labor rights and guarantees for all, as these have been the main pillars of our social project.

A total of 36 labor, salary and social security measures have been implemented. Distance working and tele-commuting are increasing; some workers have been re-assigned to other jobs and salaries have been guaranteed for workers who remained at home, caring for their young children and elders, as well as persons with poor health or who have not been reassigned to another job; more than 240,000 self-employed workers have been exempted from paying taxes; the payment of pensions has been maintained and social workers are providing special attention to vulnerable families, among other actions.

No one has been left unprotected. Appropriate conditions now exist to initiate the recovery process and move toward a new normality, based on the widest possible participation of the people in the decision-making process.

Mr. Director-General:

International cooperation and solidarity are today more necessary than ever. Nothing is worth more than a person's life. This is a fundamental principle of the Cuban Revolution, and the foundation of our international cooperation in the fields of health and education, and every other area that contributes to human dignity.

That is why we strongly reject, condemn and repudiate all unilateral coercive measures imposed on sovereign nations like Cuba, Venezuela and others that are today suffering the most cruel, massive punishments for having chosen a political or social system different from those of dominant economic powers. These measures are inhuman and should be eliminated, all the more so in the context of the current pandemic, when sanctions mean genocide.

Given its mandate, the International Labor Organization, with a record of work supporting social justice, the promotion of decent employment and the protection of the human rights of workers, can contribute to helping labor leave behind the crisis caused by COVID-19.

Cuba, as a founding country of this organization, reiterates its willingness to continue strengthening the indispensable multilateralism, solidarity and international cooperation, and remains committed to continue guaranteeing

the protection of workers' rights and move toward the construction of a more just world.

Work is a sacred right and value. As was expressed by the historical leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, and I quote: "...only by working will it be possible to move forward; only by working will it be possible to produce the goods that the country needs; only by working will it be possible to produce more food; only by working will it be possible to address the country's most pressing challenges."

Thank you, very much.

# **Multilateralism, Cooperation And Solidarity Must Be The Order Of The Day**

## **Remarks at a session of the Economic Commission for Latin America (October 26, 2020)**

His Excellency Mr. Carlos Alvarado Quesada, President of the Republic of Costa Rica;

Your Excellency, Mr. António Guterres, United Nations Secretary General

Your Excellency, dear Mrs. Alicia Bárcena, ECLAC Executive Secretary;

Distinguished ministers, heads of delegations, delegates and guests:

It is an honor for Cuba to participate with you, even if virtually, in the opening of the 38th Session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, our dear ECLAC, the 70th anniversary of which we celebrated in Havana in May of 2018, when our country assumed the pro tempore presidency of the Commission, that we pass on to Costa Rica today.

Over the more than 70 years of tireless work promoting sustainable economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean, Cuba's active participation in favor of multilateralism, the exchange of knowledge and cooperation, can be discerned, all of which makes us feel part of ECLAC.

As the Pro Tempore President of the Commission; in its Committee on South-South Cooperation and the Latin American and Caribbean countries' Sustainable Development Forum, Cuba has worked intensely, aware of the enormous challenges involved in the commitment to promote cooperation and sustainable development in the region, especially with our sister nations of the Caribbean, responding to ECLAC's initiative "The Caribbean First."

During our term as President, extended a few months due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Cuba was honored to have accompanied the principal processes directed toward implementing the 2030 Agenda, and strengthening South-South and triangular cooperation at the regional and international levels, in the interest of broadening and deepening achievements and surpassing the objectives.

Working to reduce existing gaps and consolidate the regional organization, we committed ourselves to the search for concerted, comprehensive solutions to common or similar problems, always adhering to the premise of "leaving no one behind."

Regarding these last two years, I would like to highlight the third meeting of the Forum of Latin American and Caribbean Countries on Sustainable Development, held in April of 2019, when the Quadrennial Assessment

Report on progress and challenges of the region in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda was presented.

With more than 1,200 participants on hand, including representatives of civil society and the private sector, and more than 50 parallel events, this meeting marked the history of the Forum.

Dear delegates:

In Latin America and the Caribbean, a shameful degree of economic and social inequality persists. Structural and systemic disparities between nations, and within them, remain and are widening in a complex and difficult international context on all levels: health, economic, financial, social, and environmental.

It is clear that the pandemic has accentuated the limitations of our productive systems and has exposed all our vulnerabilities.

Its economic and financial impact and consequent social costs lead to discouraging projections. The region, in which economic growth is slowing more sharply than in other parts of the world, is performing less well than it has over the last seven decades.

It is not others saying so. The Regional Commission itself, our ECLAC, is projecting a decline of 9.1% in 2020, the worst gross domestic product in the region's history.

Meanwhile, climate change continues to mercilessly ravage our countries, particularly island states. It is estimated that by 2050 the economic cost of climate change in the region will reach between 1.5 and 5 percent of today's regional GDP.

Faced with this dramatic prospect, the promotion of comprehensive policies for sustainable development, mitigation, adaptation and resilience are urgently needed.

Creating better conditions and capacities for risk management and reduction in the Caribbean are key to closing the technology gap, as are promoting cooperation and timely access to the necessary resources to mitigate the effects of climate change.

We firmly believe that only an articulated response by countries at all levels can help us overcome the multiple crises facing Latin America and the Caribbean today.

To achieve this, it is essential to continue fostering renewed and strengthened multilateralism; cooperative solidarity and the search for concerted and innovative solutions. Multilateralism, cooperation and solidarity must be the order of the day in these times.

It is our duty to together protect peace, an indispensable premise for development, a right and historical demand of our peoples.

I reaffirm here what we expressed two years ago at the Havana meeting: "There will be no development without peace, and no peace without development." Accordingly, we emphasize the validity of the postulates of the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace.

It is impossible to ignore here our condemnation of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States government, which has been brutally intensified during the last two years, despite the COVID-19 pandemic times.

This essential component of hostile U.S. policy toward Cuba is meant to harm the nation as a whole, to obtain political concessions and create chaos.

The opportunistic escalation of this criminal siege, as recognized by the current U.S. administration, aims to totally disrupt our trade, our access to fuel and foreign exchange, and reinforces the blockade's condition as a concrete impediment to national development.

The most recent brutal measure can only be described as a malicious act, of extreme cruelty, of human barbarism: soon, Cuban families will not be able to receive remittances from the nation where the largest group of our emigrants reside.

As we have said so many times, the blockade qualifies as genocide and constitutes a flagrant, massive and systematic violation of the human rights of our people, but it will not divert us one millimeter away from our development programs.

Cuba maintains its commitment to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

We have a National Economic and Social Development Plan through 2030, containing strategic axes linked to the Sustainable Development Objectives; as well as an "Economic and Social Strategy to strengthen the economy and confront the world crisis caused by COVID-19" for the country's recovery.

Once again, we reiterate here our commitment to solidarity cooperation on the basis of mutual respect, disinterested aid and complementarity, under the invariable principle of sharing what we have, not what we have left over.

Neither the blockade nor the ferocious defamatory campaigns being launched today against Cuba's solidary medical cooperation will impact the humanist vocation of our Revolution, particularly given the complex international panorama and the pressing demands generated by the pandemic.

I would also like to place on record the Cuban state's deepest appreciation for the work of ECLAC and Ms. Alicia Bárcena, for their dedication and efforts in pursuit of sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean. And for their transparent, unprejudiced attitude toward Cuba,



which they welcomed into the heart of ECLAC during our term in office with a deep spirit of cooperation that worked in two directions: respectfully demanding the contributions we could make and supporting, with willingness and great commitment, our requests for technical assistance.

During her years leading the Commission, Cuba believes that the efforts of the current Executive Secretary were characterized not only by their effectiveness as professional and responsible work, but also by the passion and commitment of a true defender of an environment of peace and cooperation to achieve development.

I would also like to place on record our support for Costa Rica and its President, Carlos Alvarado, along with our best wishes for their exercise of the Commission's Pro Tempore Presidency, which we are formally relinquishing today. As our historic leader, Comandante en jefe Fidel Castro Ruz, said at the closing of the First Summit of the South, held in Havana on April 14, 2000: "Everything will depend on us."

You can always count on Cuba to make the Sustainable Development Goals and 2030 Agenda possible in Our America. It is a debt we owe all the heroes of the Americas' independence and to the dreams of emancipation of our peoples. Whatever depends on our efforts, we will do.

Thank you very much.

# **It Will Always Be An Honor To Serve You Beloved Homeland**

**Speech held at the National Assembly of People's Power (October 28, 2020)**

Dear Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee

Compañero Esteban Lazo Hernández, President of the National Assembly of People's Power and the Council of State

Dear Deputies:

On a day like today, it is especially inspiring to remember Commander Camilo Cienfuegos, the man with the broad smile, the man of the people, plain and simple, who defined loyalty to the country and to Fidel, like few others, when he wrote to the leader of the Revolution that it would be easier for him to stop breathing than to stop being faithful to his confidence. Our recollection of and tributes to the Hero of Yaguajay are sentiments that continue to permeate deeply into the soul of our people and will be eternal.

For the first time in the history of the National Assembly, we have met with some members of our legislature participating from a distance. The pandemic could not paralyze us to the degree of further compromising the long legislative agenda that has been addressed with the approval of four important laws during this session.

More legislation will be proposed during the upcoming session of this Assembly next December.

Our people have been able to appreciate, by different means, the level of the discussion of these laws evident in the valuable comments made by deputies. It should be added that the legislative work involved the extensive participation of specialists from various institutions, including university professors, and the population, which had access to the proposals through various channels. This is an experience that we must continue and perfect.

The approval of laws on the President and Vice President of the Republic, as well as the Organization and Functioning of the Council of Ministers, together with those approved in previous periods, ensure the normative development of Constitutional premises regarding the superior organs of the state and the government. This should allow for greater functional delimitation of these and strengthen the institutional order of the country.

The Foreign Service Law perfects and consolidates its organization and the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in implementing the state's foreign policy, based on principles enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic.

The Law of Revocation of those Elected to People's Power Bodies develops one of the imperatives of socialist democracy in compliance with provisions

of the new Electoral Law. In line with the Constitution, it establishes the new authorities subject to recall and procedures for revocation.

These sessions have also allowed us to complete pending tasks, including settlement of the 2019 Budget, which has been sufficiently debated previously, although I am interested in highlighting the timely adjustments that allowed us to implement a partial salary increase in the budgeted sector and Social Security pensions, which required more than 4 billion pesos.

A year like 2019, marked by severe financial tensions due to the tightening of the blockade, imposed the need to further boost tax revenues, based on increasing the results of our enterprises and discipline in paying contributions in all sectors of the economy.

This will require a rigorous confrontation with non-compliance and tax evasion; measures that, along with more rational use of budgetary resources and an increase in the efficiency of their use, should guarantee the gradual reduction of the fiscal deficit and, consequently, allow for the sustainable management of public debt to achieve the macroeconomic balances that are indispensable to consolidation of our economic and social model.

Compañeras and compañeros:

In July, the Council of Ministers approved the Economic and Social Strategy to address the complex situation imposed by COVID-19 and the continual escalations of the blockade, which has been criminally tightened under conditions of pandemic.

Let us not forget that we have borne the effects of this prolonged economic war over decades and that between 2019 and 2020 alone more than 130 measures against our nation were adopted, with the deliberate purpose of stifling the economy, creating discontent and despair in the population and blaming all our difficulties on the alleged "inefficiency of the Cuban economic model."

The panorama could not be more challenging. The profound effect on our income from tourism, as a consequence of worldwide paralysis of the leisure and travel industry, was joined, from the beginning of the year, by an increase in health expenses to control the pandemic, decreased employment in productive activities, as well as closures and reductions in non-state activity, among other factors.

Conscious that everything will depend on our efforts, exemplary work has been done to confront the pandemic and the difficult economic situation, by the Party and government leadership at all levels and also by mass organizations, without renouncing the country's fundamental programs, as established in the National Economic and Social Development Plan through 2030.

The government is determined to move forward, during the remaining two months of the year, to reach the highest level of implementation possible within 2020 itself.

As we have stated on other occasions, we must accelerate the pace and the profound transformations that we owe ourselves through innovation. This is why we insist so much on the role of our universities and scientific centers, which accompany us in the analysis and development of proposals.

Without neglecting health measures to confront the pandemic, for even a moment, it is essential for the enterprise system to implement recently agreed-upon measures, which create a different environment, with greater autonomy and responsibility.

Along with this, the ability to export and import, and transformations that will be introduced for non-state forms of management, as well as the implementation of territorial development policy and monetary re-ordering, will have at our disposal a more productively interconnected, more integrated, innovative and capable enterprise system.

Implementing the economic-social strategy and achieving results is the highest priority task in the economy at this time.

Taking this path, we will demand that all levels of government and enterprise leadership carefully supervise the implementation of measures related to this strategy, within their areas of competence, giving top priority to food production and distribution, increasing savings, especially in foreign currency and energy, and focusing on national production; designing solutions and expediting processes, making administrative procedures simpler and more transparent; promoting productive links between state and non-state sectors, and updating regional development strategies in accordance with approved policy.

Compañeras and compañeros:

During the current year, under the extraordinary, harsh conditions imposed by the pandemic, imperialism has chosen to tighten the blockade in an extreme and unprecedented manner.

Although our work confronting this affliction has been successful, we faced serious difficulties during the period in obtaining the high-tech equipment that would allow for greater precision in diagnosis and treatment to ensure the recovery of patients. The damage not only impacted commercial operations associated with the battle against the pandemic, but also the arrival of solidarity and humanitarian aid from various countries.

This is a reality that Cubans cannot forget.

The United States increased, precisely in this period, the persecution of our financial transactions and continued its intense efforts to prevent delivery of fuel supplies, with unconventional methods inappropriate in peacetime.

The U.S. government directly attacked the travel industry, even before we were forced to close our borders as a protective measure. To do so, it imposed unilateral and unjustified restrictions on air travel between the two countries and went so far as to instruct its citizens where, and where not, they could stay in Cuba.

As part of its goal of eliminating the arrival of any foreign exchange to our country, in recent months the U.S. has managed to severely limit the sending of remittances. Just a few days ago, new measures were announced that in practice deny those living in the United States the ability to send remittances to their relatives in Cuba through legitimate, safe, institutional channels.

The pretexts and lies used by the U.S. government to justify this action are ever more cynical and shameless. No one can be deceived; this is an action that affects a considerable number of compatriots and their relations with relatives and close friends living in the neighboring country.

We have insisted and it is worth emphasizing: the economic blockade lacks political, legal and moral justification and continues to be the main obstacle to advancing Cuba's bilateral relations with the United States.

The damage caused to the well-being of the population, to the country's capacity to meet many needs and guarantee basic services is undeniable. It affects the lives of all Cubans in one way or another.

The U.S. government must face the indisputable reality that the blockade harms the Cuban people as a whole, but it is incapable of breaking our capacity to resist.

It punishes families, Cubans living abroad, violates human rights, makes communication, travel, visas and family reunification difficult; but it does not and will never succeed in subjecting the Cuban nation to imperialist domination.

The hostility of this government toward the island, in such a difficult period for the international community, has included unbridled attacks on the international medical cooperation provided by Cuba. The threats and pressure on numerous countries to forego requesting or accepting Cuban help reached shameless unprecedented levels.

Given the general crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and its longer term effects, countries of the South are facing a very unfavorable international economic situation.

Fully perceiving its impact on economic and productive stability at a global level is difficult, on patterns of trade and supply, technological advances, the structure of communications and transportation.

The effect on prospects for international tourism and travel, the energy use patterns of many countries, prices and availability of commodities, food, raw materials and advanced technologies has yet to be estimated.

These are all realities that have an impact on Cuba and other nations. It is difficult for any country to face them alone.

We have strongly defended our commitment to preserving and promoting multilateralism, especially by strengthening the central role of the United Nations and fostering international cooperation, which is essential to addressing global challenges and threats.

Our record of promoting and supporting multilateralism is well known and respected. The brutal pressure exerted by the United States to prevent Cuba from being elected to the Human Rights Council once again failed to overshadow the recognition our country enjoys in the international community.

With the support of 88 percent of UN member states, Cuba was elected, testimony to its constructive contributions to the body, of which we are founders, and to the prestige we have achieved in the defense and promotion of human rights.

Just a few days ago, the requirements that ensure the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which will become effective on January 22, 2021, were met. This is an event of great importance to world peace and stability.

This accomplishment confirms the success of the efforts of many countries of the South which tirelessly advocate nuclear disarmament, efforts in which we played an active part. It also represents the realization of a dream of Comandante en jefe Fidel Castro Ruz, who with the strength of his ideas was an invincible fighter for disarmament and world peace.

In our immediate environment, the resurgence of the Monroe Doctrine is an affront to all of the hemisphere's sovereign states, whose right to self-determination is clearly challenged by imperialist ambition.

The Venezuelan people are facing this threat, waging a heroic battle against aggression, interference in their internal affairs and a relentless economic war. I reaffirm that Cuba's solidarity and support for the Bolivarian Chavista Revolution, for the civil-military union of its people and for President Nicolás Maduro Moros, who heads the constitutional government of that sister Republic, remain unwavering.

A few days before the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Comprehensive Cuba-Venezuela Cooperation Agreement by Comandante en jefe Fidel Castro Ruz and Comandante Hugo Chávez Frías, I reiterate that, despite pressure and threats from the United States, Cuba will not forego its cooperative relations with our Venezuelan brothers.

The Bolivian people's resounding victory electing compañero Luis Arce and David Choquehuanca in the country's elections demonstrates that there was no vote fraud in 2019, but rather a coup against compañero Evo Morales, orchestrated by the United States in collusion with the OAS and the local oligarchy.

Heartfelt congratulations to MAS for this triumph. We share the joy that hope is returning to recover the social conquests taken from the Bolivian people.

The people of Chile achieved a great popular victory that contributes a great deal to the struggle for the social demands of millions of Chileans and of the region.

May a message of solidarity reach the land of Sandino and our rejection of the external pressures exerted with the intention of affecting the stability and the social- economic advances of the Republic of Nicaragua, achieved by the government of Reconciliation and National Unity presided by Comandante Daniel Ortega Saavedra.

The defense of the dignity and the integration of Latin America and the Caribbean have in the governments of Mexico and Argentina faithful exponents.

I reiterate our invariable commitment to the postulates of the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace.

Deputies:

A difficult, challenging year is coming to an end. Some have not hesitated to call it a terrible year.

Over a few months, millions contracted COVID-19, causing the deaths of more than a million worldwide. Many more lost their jobs, their studies or saw other important personal life projects go up in smoke. There is talk of record numbers of unemployment, poverty and extreme poverty and a coming pandemic of hunger.

But the virus that came to cripple the world economy and transform our lives has also shaken inertia, in many cases, and is leaving us lessons, learning and growth that we should not underestimate.

To begin, COVID-19 has come to remind us how interconnected we are in this world, a reality that favors the spread of the virus, but at the same time forced us to confront it in a coordinated fashion, opting for cooperation and solidarity, two practices that the crude pragmatism of neoliberalism almost extinguished.

In Cuba, it must be repeated many times, the epidemic arrived along with a reinforced blockade. Regardless of its illegality and immorality, there has been no truce in this asymmetric, multidimensional war to erase our example of independence and sovereignty from the face of the earth.

But those of us who are members of the band of non-conformists and optimists, like Fidel and Raúl, learned with them and their comrades in struggle that all challenges can be overcome. Cubans are proving, once again, that it can be done. (Applause)

Over these seven months of tireless struggle against the epidemic, we have confirmed the capacity of the planned economy and health system of Cuban socialism to control outbreaks and to provide secure assistance to the entire population, with no differences. And we have cooperated in solidarity with the most affected nations.

While the profound inequality created and exacerbated by the capitalist philosophy is taking a deplorable toll of human lives in many countries, including highly developed ones, Cuba has managed to keep the virus at bay and lower lethality to negligible levels.

Every day our media offer inspiring examples of the daily work in Medicine and Science. A group of experts from various disciplines have laid the foundations for the solid strategy the government developed, not without great effort, to contain and defeat COVID-19.

There is no mystery in this skilled, talented workforce, laboring for the same goal: socialism. A socialism that is still imperfect and weighed down by burdens that we must let go along the way, but one that is essentially humane and just, as no other system in history has been.

The fact that a small country, blockaded and defamed by the greatest power in history, could courageously resist the attacks of its adversary and, moreover, grow, creating, innovating and contributing to collective salvation, within and beyond its borders, can only be explained by the humane orientation of our project, the political will of the Party and the government, and the extraordinary strength of a people who are experts in endurance and winning.

This is not a chance event; it has a cause. There is a component in Cuban DNA, in the magnificent mix of ethnicities and history of continuous resilience, from which emerges from "that sweet word: Cuban." But there is another factor that is no less important, which is the conscious construction, over more than 60 years, of a work that is larger and stronger than we are, with an authentic leadership, respected and admired in the world, more respected and admired the more it has resisted the blows of the adversary without giving up. I speak, of course, of Fidel, of Raúl, of the Centennial Generation, whom we are honored to follow, with proud dedication to the cause to which they devoted their lives. (Applause)

The pandemic has provoked a confrontation of political paradigms, in which the social and humanist perspective of the Cuban Revolution is undoubtedly winning: look at the exemplary actions of our young people. Today we can see that, despite the damage, the strong impact on our limited resources, COVID-19 obliged us to grow, to rise to the occasion on all levels. It was either surrender, or take a leap beyond our strength. And we leaped.

The chapter the Cuban people are writing right now is heroic, as we simultaneously face the epidemic, the ravages of a tightened blockade, and an unprecedented campaign of hate, manipulation and disinformation on social media, financed from abroad.



How can we define what is being done against a small nation, an island, an archipelago, of barely 11 million inhabitants, by a powerful empire with 30 times that population and almost 90 times its size?

Every day a threat, every day a sanction, every day an act of arrogance and contempt for what humanity has managed to construct to allow nations to understand each other. This is not politics. This is an outrage. This is abuse. This is brutal. This is shameful and infamous! You cannot call economic strangulation, financial persecution, pressure on third parties, the refusal to accept a different way of doing things, politics.

Today we can tell our people and the world that the country is growing, with commitment and determination to move forward despite the circumstances in which a virus has immersed the planet. Those who have insisted on writing the epitaph of this triumphant Revolution will once again be left with only the desire.

Esteemed compañeras and compañeros:

I ask our Assembly, those present here and those participating virtually, to pay a special tribute to our people. May the applause they offer every night, to that noble and devoted part of themselves, be heard loudly in this room and in all of Cuba, for all of Cuba, because without the people's understanding of every measure, without the massive participation in their implementation, the political ideal would be just that: an ideal.

Thank you, Cuba! It will always be an honor to serve you, beloved homeland!

Socialism or Death!

Homeland or Death!

We will triumph! (Ovation)

## **Statement At The UN General Assembly**

### **Statement at the 31<sup>st</sup> Special Session of the UN General Assembly (December 3, 2020)**

Mr. Secretary General;

Mr. President;

Distinguished Heads of State and Government;

Heads of delegations;

I would like to thank the Republic of Azerbaijan, the current president of the Non-Aligned Movement, for the initiative to convene this Special Session of the General Assembly.

An articulated response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, consistent with the protocols and good practices established by the World Health Organization, can only be promoted at the global scale by this body, which is the most universal and representative of the United Nations system.

It is a sad and undeniable fact that the pandemic has exacerbated the serious problems and colossal challenges that humanity had been already facing before the outbreak of this disease.

We are referring to the wars, including non-conventional wars; the use and threat of use of force and the implementation of unilateral coercive measures, but also about the absence or precarious situation of health services, education and social security under the blind rules of the market and the unequal exchange that has prevailed in the world.

The signs of what some experts have described as the worst economic recession since the Second World War have become dramatically visible today; and no one doubts that the brunt of the crisis will be borne by the countries of the South, which are already affected by the abuse of neoliberal policies that has amplified the ravages caused by poverty.

The foreign debt of developing countries, which has been paid several times before and has grown bigger as a result of the pandemic, thus severing right off the aspirations of economic and social well-being, is unpayable and should be condoned.

Under the present circumstances, the establishment of a just, democratic and equitable international order is an imperative. It is a condition for the survival of the species in an ever more interconnected and paradoxically unequal world.

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the human cost of that inequality and has revealed the urgent need to strengthen national health systems; promote universal and free access to basic medical services and guarantee an equitable distribution of vital resources.

The world watches in shock, for example, how the United States, responsible for 38 per cent of the global military budget, is unable to take responsibility for the more than 11 million infected persons and the more than 238 who have died from COVID-19 in that country.

When looking at the harsh situation caused by infections, new outbreaks and the collapse of health services in nations with an enviable prosperity, one question arises: Why is the enormous budget that is currently being dilapidated in the arms race not used instead to confront this and other much older pandemics, such as hunger and poverty?

Mr. President;

Since the emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and in view of the possibility that it might become a pandemic, Cuba designed a National Program aimed at its prevention and control. Its implementation is supported by the strengths of our country's health system –of proven quality standing and universal coverage- and scientific development.

Today, in a spirit of modesty, and also with wholesome pride, we can explain to the world how this was possible.

In Cuba, we have implemented a government management system based on science and innovation, which has furthered up interconnections among such areas as knowledge, production and social services.

This is an inclusive, participatory, systemic, cross-cutting and intersectoral system that crystallizes and achieves its best results in the robust protocols applied in coping with the COVID-19 pandemic and the responsible attitude adopted by our people.

In other words, what we do is to give practical expression to the way in which the social system operates in Cuba and is capable of solving or successfully tackle very complex problems, while human beings are the top priority of the government's work.

The role of science and its articulation with government management has been crucial. The relevant achievements attained by the medical and pharmaceutical industry and biotechnology allow us to be in a better position to cope with the disease. Two Cuban candidate vaccines that are currently going through the clinical trial phase have been included among the 47 registered by the World Health Organization.

Faithful to our humanist vocation, 53 Cuban medical brigades have helped to cope with the disease in 39 countries and territories, which joined those that were already offering their services in 59 nations.

That has been possible even under the heavy burden of the criminal and unjust blockade imposed by the government of the United States –which has been tightened in an unprecedented way- and a cynical disparagement campaigned launched against our international medical cooperation.

Here we denounce that aggressive behavior against Cuba and other sovereign nations as well as the announced attempt to re-enact the Monroe Doctrine, which is a violation of International Law and the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace.

Our commitment to the purposes and principles of this Organization remains unaltered. We remain firmly and resolutely committed to continue working in favor of multilateralism, solidarity, human dignity and social justice.

This global emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic sounds like a new call to the world's awareness. This time we should listen to it. Yes, we can. Cuba is an example of that.

Thank you, very much

# **Among Revolutionaries, We Communists Go To The Fore**

## **Speech at the 8<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba (April 19, 2021)**

Dear Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, leader of the Cuban Revolution;

Dear compañeros of the historic generation of the revolutionary process and founders of the Communist Party of Cuba;

Members of the Political Bureau and Secretariat of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee;

Members of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee;

Delegates;

Compañeras and compañeros:

The Eighth Congress concludes and I have no hesitation in describing it as historic. This is a fact.

Apart from our emotions and feelings involved in living history and the undefeated leadership of those who today pass on responsibilities and tasks to our generation, there is a transcendence that is impossible to ignore:

The Apostle's Centennial Generation, guided by Fidel and Raúl over more than six intense decades, can declare today, with dignity and pride, that the socialist revolution they made only 90 miles from the powerful empire, is alive, firm, and taking action amidst the gale shaking an ever more unequal and unjust world, following the collapse of the world socialist system.

And this generation can say much more. This generation can affirm that the Revolution does not end with theirs, because they managed to shape new generations equally committed to the ideals of social justice that have cost the blood of the best sons and daughters of the Cuban nation.

What we receive today are not positions or tasks. This is not only the leadership of a country. What we have before us, continually challenging us, is a heroic, immense work.

It is the daring uprising of Céspedes, the unwavering honor of Agramonte, the dignified intransigence of Maceo, the impressive acumen of Gómez, the Maroons' quest for liberty, the passion of war poets, the ferocity of Mariana in the scrub and the inspiring light of Martí.

It is the foundational youth of Mella, the tremendous verses of Villena, the radical anti-imperialism of Guiteras, the absolute dedication of the Centennial Generation, Haydee and Melba behind bars, Vilma defying the repressors, Celia organizing the command post in the Sierra, Cuban mothers confronting the dictatorship that murdered their children; the

female platoon in the Sierra, Camilo's boundless fidelity, Che's universal legacy, Fidel's profound, creative leadership, the continuity upheld by Raul.

It is the Great Rebellion, the underground, the guerrilla fronts, the strategic counteroffensive, the invasion of the West, the decisive battles, the triumphal entry into Havana, the Agrarian Reform, the literacy campaign, the fight against counterrevolutionary bandits, the militias, the Girón victory, the October Crisis, internationalist collaboration in Africa, Asia and Latin America, Che's guerrilla war, to the blood for Vietnam, for Angola, for Ethiopia, for Nicaragua, the medical brigades, Elián González, The Five, ELAM, Operation Miracle, ALBA, the Henry Reeve contingent, science, medicine, culture, high performance sports, universities, and human solidarity re-founded in this land.

What unites us is so much that the list will always be incomplete, but this can some idea of the great monument that the Cuban people have erected over more than 150 years of struggle.

This history can be summarized in two words: the people and unity, which is to say, the Party. Because the Communist Party of Cuba, which has never been an electoral party, was not born of a split. It was born from the unity of all political forces with profoundly humanist ideals that had been shaped in the struggle to transform an unequal, unjust country, dependent on a foreign power and under the yoke of a bloody military dictatorship.

Today we say: We are Cuba! Cuba Viva! and it sounds simple, easy, but how difficult it has been to achieve and maintain our sovereignty and independence in the midst of the most ferocious siege.

The historic generation, aware of its role in this heroic creation - that is every day of the Cuban Revolution - in the face of a multidimensional, permanent war waged by its closest neighbor, has always worked on the development of new generations and facilitated the gradual transfer of principal leadership responsibilities.

Thanks to this patient work over years, a milestone in our political history is confirmed here today, defining the Eighth Congress as the Congress of Continuity. And the central standard-bearer of this process has been compañero Army General Raúl Castro Ruz. (Applause)

When I took office as President of the Councils of State and Ministers in 2018, I wanted to express in my remarks the sentiments of many of us and recognize Raúl's work at the head of the Revolution and the Party.

With his proverbial modesty, he asked me to forego some of the words about him that I wished to state at that time. Today, abusing the responsibility that I assume leading the Party and with more knowledge of cause, due to the intimate rapport we established in addressing the issues and strategic tasks of the country, experiencing firsthand the way he has led our preparation, I would like to do historic justice and relate what I wrote at that time and, as a matter of discipline, left unsaid.

Compañero Raúl, who has prepared, conducted and led this process of generational continuity with tenacity, with no attachment to positions or responsibilities, a heightened sense of duty and of the historic moment, with serenity, maturity, confidence, revolutionary firmness, with altruism and modesty, on the basis of his own merits, authority and because Cuba needs him, will be consulted regarding the most important strategic decisions impacting the nation's destiny. (Applause) He will always be present, well informed of everything, fighting with energy, contributing ideas and arguments to the revolutionary cause, through his advice, his guidance and alertness to any error or deficiency, ready to confront imperialism as the first with his rifle in hand on the front lines of combat.

The Army General will continue to be present because he is a reference for every Cuban communist and revolutionary. Raúl, as our people affectionately call him, is Fidel's best disciple, but he has also contributed a great deal to revolutionary ethics, the work of the Party and to improvement of government.

The work done under his leadership at the head of the country over the last decade is colossal. His legacy of resistance in the face of threats and aggression and in efforts to perfect our society is paradigmatic.

He assumed the leadership of the country in a difficult economic and social situation. In his dimension as a statesmanship, forging consensus, he has led, pushed for and encouraged profound, necessary structural and conceptual changes as part of the process of perfecting and updating the Cuban economic and social model.

Raúl was able to achieve the renegotiation of an enormous debt, honestly and respectfully abiding by the word given and the principle that the nation would honor its commitments to creditors, thus strengthening confidence in Cuba.

He led, with wisdom, the debate that culminated in a transcendental update of our Migratory Law; insisted on transformations in the agricultural sector; promoted without prejudice the expansion of non-state forms of economic management, the approval of a new Foreign Investment Law, the creation of the Mariel Special Development Zone, the elimination of obstacles to the strengthening of Cuban state enterprises, investments in the tourism sector, the program for the computerization of society, and the maintenance and improvement, to the degree possible, of our social conquests.

With patience and intelligence, Raúl achieved the release of our Five Heroes, thus fulfilling Fidel's promise that they would return.

His trademark style was evident in wide-ranging, dynamic activity in the country's foreign relations. With firmness, dignity and mettle, he personally led the process of talks and negotiations directed toward the reestablishment of diplomatic relations with the United States.

Raúl's unquestionable qualities as a statesman, as a defender of Latin American integration, distinguished in a special way Cuba's period as pro tempore president of CELAC. His most important legacy, the defense of unity within diversity, led to the declaration of the region as a Zone of Peace and contributed decisively to the peace talks in Colombia.

Raúl has defended the rights of Caribbean countries and particularly those of Haiti in international forums like no one else. With deep pride, Cubans listened to his emotional voice and precise language at the Summit of the Americas in Panama, where he recalled the true history of Our America.

He achieved these accomplishments while facing the illness and death of his beloved companion in life and struggles, our extraordinary Vilma (Applause), with whom he shared his passion for the Revolution and with whom he founded a beautiful family. During this period, he also suffered the illness and death of his principle reference in revolutionary life, who was also his boss and brother, *compañero* Fidel, to whom he has been uncompromisingly loyal. (Applause)

He put revolutionary courage and sense of duty before his human pain. He kissed the urn that held Vilma's ashes and offered a military salute before the boulder bearing Fidel's name, and led the country without rest, with success, energy and dedication. His contributions to the Revolution are transcendental.

The Raul we know, admire, respect and love, made his political debut as the leader of a group of young university students who in April of 1952 symbolically buried the 1940 Constitution, trampled by the March 10 coup; in January of 1953, he was one of the founders of the March of the Torches and in March of the same year he attended the International Conference on the Rights of Youth and preparatory meetings for the Fourth World Festival of Youth and Students. Upon his return, he became one of the Moncada assailants, becoming a leader in combat. He was then imprisoned on the Isle of Pines, participated in preparation of the struggle against the Batista's dictatorship during his exile in Mexico, set sail on the Granma, was reunited with Fidel in Cinco Palmas, embarked on the struggle in the Sierra Maestra, and given his merits and courage, was promoted to Comandante and founded the Frank País Second Eastern Front, in an exemplary manner.

He is also the political leader who promoted debate on improving Party work, always demanding a strong connection with the people, with his ear to the ground. To him we owe decisive phrases and decisions at crucial moments for the country, such as that warning that "beans are as important as cannons" and the emblematic "Yes, we can!" which raised national spirits in the darkest moment of the Special Period.

The military chief of the Second Eastern Front who, amidst the war of liberation, undertook organizational and governmental experiences for the benefit of the population, which would later be extended across the country after the revolutionary victory. He directed for almost half a century the



Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, making a decisive contribution to the independence of Angola, Namibia and the end of apartheid. At the same time, he was instrumental in achieving important results in the preparation of the country's defense and in developing the strategic concept of the War of the Entire People. Under his command, the Revolutionary Armed Forces became the government's most disciplined and efficient body, in which experiences

were organized that later served the country, including enterprise improvement, with its valuable concepts of administration, sustainability, efficiency and control, from which the FAR Enterprise System was born, going on to achieve remarkable results that contribute to the country's economy.

Raúl, the guerrilla, in permanent contact and alliance with nature, acquired a special sensitivity to environmental issues, which would later mark his efforts to promote the water diversion program and Tarea Vida (climate change).

The Comandante en jefe of the Cuban Revolution, who placed on the Army General's chest the highest decorations, dedicated precise words to his work as a leader during the closing of the Fifth Party Congress. Speaking of his brother in blood and ideas, Fidel stated: "Life has brought us much satisfaction and many emotions, much luck, and I can truly say that it has been a stroke of luck for our Party, our Revolution and for me, that we have had a compañero like Raúl, of whose merits I do not need to speak, of whose experience, capacity and contributions to the Revolution it is not necessary to speak. He is known for his tireless activity, his constant and methodical work in the armed forces, in the Party. How fortunate that we have had this." (Applause) This luck, described by Fidel, is called Raúl Modesto Castro Ruz. (Applause).

Compañeras y compañeros:

This Congress, with its broad, critical debate, defending a comprehensive vision of continuity, has contributed ideas, concepts and directives that chart the course to move forward resisting. But it is essential to face this challenge with the greatest possible knowledge of the complex national and international context, conscious that the world has changed dramatically and that there are too many closed doors for nations with few resources and even more for those of us who are intent on being sovereign.

The level of concentration, diversity and complexity of today's media, of the technological tools that support digital networks and the resources employed in the generation of contents, allow powerful groups - fundamentally in highly developed countries - to convert into universal patterns ideas, tastes, emotions and ideological currents which are often completely alien to the context they impact. For these wizards of communication, truth is not only negotiable but even worse: superfluous. Via the dissemination of false premises, distortions and infamous lies of all

kinds, they contribute to promoting political instability in an attempt to overthrow governments, wherever the will of a free and independent nation has not been broken. No people is safe from lies and slander in the era of "post-truth." This is a reality that Cuba faces every day, as we persist in our intention to build a more just, sovereign socialist society, in peace with the rest of the world and without foreign interference or tutelage. The Central Report clearly exposed several of the specific challenges facing our country, particularly those associated with attempts to dominate and impose the hegemony of U.S. imperialism and the brutal blockade, with its extraterritorial impact which batters us on almost all fronts and, over the last four years, was escalated to a qualitatively more aggressive level.

No one with a minimum of honesty and economic data available in the public domain can ignore the fact that this siege constitutes the principal obstacle to our country's development to progress in our search for prosperity and well-being. By reaffirming this truth, we are not attempting to hide the inadequacies of our own reality, about which a great deal has been said. This is about responding to those who cynically disseminate the idea that the blockade does not exist.

The economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba for more than 60 years - opportunistically and maliciously tightened during periods of greatest crisis over the last three decades, in an attempt to create hunger and misery that would provoke a social outbreak and undermine the legitimacy of the Revolution - is the longest violation, sustained over time, against the human rights of a people and constitutes, given its impact, a crime against humanity.

This historical offense will remain indelible in the conscience and hearts of Cuban men and women who have felt in the flesh the disproportionate cruelty of an enemy many times superior, which cannot accept the construction, under its nose, of an alternative, more just and equitable society, founded on solid principles and ideals of social justice and human solidarity, with independence and sovereignty as the compass and fundamental premise of our decisions.

Let no one dare deny the blockade even the slightest responsibility for our principal problems. To do so is to deny the empire's unjustifiable powers: its almost absolute domination of global markets and finances and its decisive influence on the politics of other governments, some of which, believing themselves to be partners, act as henchmen.

It must be said again and again, without fear of repeating ourselves. They must be the first to tire of a crime that is as useless as it is long. Our demand to put an end to the blockade is and will be without respite, a relentless struggle as long as this ruthless and genocidal policy remains in effect. We know we have the support of the international community, reaffirmed on countless occasions, and of a large portion of Cubans abroad.

To this day, the 242 hostile measures adopted by the Donald Trump administration remain in force, in addition to actions resulting from the re-inclusion of Cuba on the State Department's spurious, arbitrary list of countries that allegedly sponsor terrorism. No U.S. official, no politician of this or any other country can state that Cuba sponsors terrorism, without ignoring the truth. We are a country that is the victim of terrorism, organized, financed and executed, in most cases, by the United States.

The campaigns of subversion and ideological poisoning promoted by United States agencies and entities continue, with the intention of discrediting Cuba, slandering the Revolution, attempting to confuse the people, encouraging despair, apathy, and recalcitrance, exacerbating internal contradictions.

They are designed to take advantage of the obvious material scarcity and difficulties faced by our population, as a consequence of the combined effect of the global economic crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic and the tightening of the economic blockade.

It is said that Cuba is not a priority for the United States, and as a sovereign nation has no need to be so. It is worth asking: Why does specific legislation exist, such as the Torricelli Act or the Helms-Burton Act - just to mention two examples - with the sole purpose of attacking and attempting to control Cuba's destiny by coercing third parties that establish or intend to establish trade or cooperation relations with us? Why does the United States devote hundreds of millions of dollars on efforts to subvert the Cuban constitutional order? Why do they spend so much time and money trying to undermine the national conscience of Cuban women and men? What justifies a cruel and relentless economic war for more than 60 years? Why do they pay the price of international isolation, as evidenced in the United Nations and other international forums, by maintaining a morally and legally unsustainable policy?

Our aspiration is to live in peace and interact with our northern neighbor as we do with the rest of the international community, on the basis of equality and mutual respect, without interference of any kind. This is the position of the Party and the state. It is the will of our people.

It is striking that the U.S. government declares as its foreign policy priorities the fight against climate change; confronting health threats, such as the COVID-19 pandemic; the promotion of human rights; and migration issues. This contrasts sharply with the actual conduct of the country and its historical record, both in domestic and foreign policy. The examples are well known.

Paradoxically, these four issues are areas in which the interest of both peoples and the mutual benefit would justify exploring the possibilities of bilateral cooperation, if a solution to such complex problems is truly sought, with honesty and a desire to achieve results.

In these times of world uncertainty, of enormous environmental challenge, facing the blows of a pandemic that has reconfigured the world's behavior and aggravated the global crisis that was on the horizon, the Party's work will be focused on defense of the Revolution. The Party leads the Cuban Revolution's foreign policy, which rests on the notion that a better world is possible and that to struggle for it requires the cooperation of many and the mobilization of the peoples.

This has been a consistent guiding principle of our international efforts and is reconfirmed by this Congress.

We express our willingness to develop friendly, cooperative relations with any country in the world; we are pleased to practice international solidarity even in countries with government ideologies we do not share. We reiterate the determination to expose the truth with clarity, no matter how much this may bother some, to defend principles, join just causes, confront atrocities, as we have confronted foreign aggression, colonialism, racism and apartheid.

This is the foundation of our aspirations for the full independence of Our America and of our commitment to help achieve an economically and socially integrated region, capable of defending the commitment of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace.

This is the foreign policy described in the Congress Central Report, which we reaffirm today.

Compañeras y compañeros:

It has been very difficult to resist and face the current situation, which has slowed our advance toward the prosperity we desire. Attention to meeting the demands and needs of the people has not ceased; we have explained every decision, convening and undertaking processes, with complex actions and measures, but the truth is that understanding and success have not always been achieved.

I say this without complaint. In an authentic Revolution, victory lies in learning. We are not taking a proven route. We are challenged to constantly innovate, changing everything that needs to be changed, without renouncing our dearest principles. Without ever departing from the concept of Revolution bequeathed to us by the undefeated leader of this epic feat, but free from rigid ideas and aware of the possible mistakes involved in clearing the path as we go.

In presenting the Central Report, Army General cited the helpful experiences of China and Vietnam, where undeniable progress in the economy and their populations' standard of living has been made. Both processes, which confirm the great potential of socialist planning, have undergone more than one correction along the way, although the blockade imposed on their economies lasted less time and was less aggressive.

The work of the Party in present circumstances has been and will continue to be fundamental. It is impossible to imagine this moment without the work of the political vanguard, but our organization is urgently in need of changes in its workstyle, which must become better suited to this era and its challenges.

The Communist Party of Cuba will continue in the recognition and defense of our essences: independence, sovereignty, socialist democracy, peace, economic efficiency, security and the conquests of social justice: Socialism! To these we add the struggle for a prosperity that ranges from food to recreation; includes scientific development, superior spiritual wealth and wellbeing; and empowers the design of the functional and the beautiful.

Socialism is worth defending because it is the answer to the need for a more just, equitable, balanced and inclusive world; it is the real possibility of designing with intelligence and sensitivity a space where everyone belongs, not only those who have the resources. It is directed, like no other system, to concretizing Martí's call to conquer all justice.

The principal strength needed to achieve this goal is unity, everything that unites us: dreams, concerns, but also fears in the face of common dangers. We will defend this unity, without discrimination, with no room allowed for prejudices, dogmas or stereotypes that unjustly divide persons.

An element indispensable to maintaining the Party's forging of this unity is the exemplarity of its members, which demands from all militants a public attitude that, based on their capacity, dedication, and accomplishments, is one of admiration and respect, among an acutely perceptive people, capable of recognizing at a distance any fake commitment or double standards.

Generational continuity is a fundamental part of this unity. It is necessary to speak and share achievements with our young people as the most important people they are; distinguish them as protagonists of the transformations underway. In them lies the strength, the disposition and decision, the sincerity needed in any undertaking or revolutionary contribution that the situation demands. During the pandemic's worse moments, they have demonstrated this with courage and responsibility.

Today it is the Party's duty to consolidate the authority gained by the historic generation on the basis of their merits, and preserve the leadership and moral authority of our organization.

To achieve these objectives, it is essential to strengthen the dynamics of the Party's functioning and the proactivity of our membership in addressing society's most pressing problems, under the premise that, given our nature as a single party, will always have the challenge of being increasingly more democratic, more attractive, closer to the people as a whole and not only in our immediate environments.

Although the subject was extensively debated before and during the Congress, I would like to offer some comments on the need to strengthen the internal life of the Party in order to have more external life, that is to say, to really function as a vanguard with leadership capacity, able to project itself in its environment with genuine concerns for the functioning of society, and with the power to convoke and mobilize, to defeat any plan of the enemies of the Cuban nation attempting to provoke a social explosion.

Today we need more consensually established forums and better prepared documentation to promote honest, constructive debate within our cells, and to stimulate popular debate, promoting regular meetings with students and young people in different professions and trades.

These are not times of printed bulletins or waiting for long processes of coordination and analysis to promote debate in our cells. The dynamics of these times force us to look for more flexible, brief and innovative ways of communicating orientations. In the Internet era, which has already allowed millions of Cubans to develop a certain perception of the world on a cell phone, our messages to the membership cannot follow the slow route of the old printing press.

The basic premise, also a legacy of the Comandante en jefe, is to never lie or violate ethical principles. The solid authority of the Party rests on these values, and our militants will always be called upon to tell and consider the truth, no matter how hard it may be or appear to be. We, the cadres of the Revolution, have been educated in this principle. And all members are always called upon to wield the truth as our first combat weapon. This is the mission of the vanguard to which we belong.

The truth, clearly and opportunely expressed, is inseparable from the permanent duty to be and to set an example. Our ability to lead depends on how we assume leadership. A people like ours, which has always identified with the bravest of the troops, will only accept and recognize as the vanguard those who are capable of acting like the leaders who shaped us.

The most revolutionary within the Revolution is and must always be the Party, just as the Party must be the force that revolutionizes the Revolution. (Applause)

We see and hear our intellectuals and artists, educators, doctors, journalists, the scientists, creators, athletes, also professionals and technicians, students, workers, workers and campesinos, combatants of the FAR and the Minint, who are members of the Party and its Youth, as the motor force that constantly revolutionizes the Revolution.

And it is our duty as Party cadres to understand that this political force is not monochromatic, nor are all members identical, much less unanimous when expressing themselves. We must be capable of appreciating the strength of the forest, of its trees in a row and in tight ranks when the

Revolution needs it. Unity must prevail without ever forgetting that we must see the forest as well as the trees. The collective and the individuals are not the same, even if although when united they are perceived as such. Preserving the legitimacy needed to ensure that the project continues to advance is based on the deep knowledge of its singularities.

We cannot allow ourselves to be overcome by the weight of difficulties. New vitality must be given to popular mobilizations, initiatives that strengthen us.

Routine has undermined many of our processes and today it is urgent to shake off inertia to promote honest, constructive discussion on priority issues, defining actions in each location, with the participation of cadres in the life of cells.

Making growth in the Party ranks a process that arouses genuine interest, with social impact, generating more attractive work methods, on the basis of members' accountability and the daily dynamics of political work in municipalities and provinces.

To the extent that we approach the battles to raise the quality of life of Cubans with clarity and transparency, and encourage youth to participate with their natural enthusiasm in all the tasks that are critical to the country, we will be reactivating the essence of the Party.

It is our obligation to be standard bearers in the fight against corruption, dishonest ways of acting, abuse of power, favoritism and double standards.

Our conduct at work, before society, in the family and our circles of friends must be coherent with the values we defend.

Party discipline, collective leadership, theoretical studies and the promotion of events on the viability of socialism, the ideas of Marxism-Leninism, the traditions of Cuban thought, particularly those of Martí and Fidel, are subjects that cannot be postponed in our Party schools, along with necessary theoretical and administrative training, with modern management techniques and a broad cultural and historical foundation.

I am convinced that we must incorporate as pillars of our work the computerization of all the organization's internal processes; the support of science and innovation in approaching and resolving the most complex issues; as well as the creative development of social communication.

The Party's work in the constant search for emancipatory alternatives also needs a good bath of science and technology, which must be part of this process.

Marxism has left us an invaluable legacy: the certainty that science and technology are an indissoluble part of social processes and that the key to the perspective and prospective development of any project lies in the relationship of science-technology-society. This is the way to build a

socialist economy based on knowledge, a society increasingly built on knowledge - A promising horizon for new generations.

There are many tasks ahead that require the active and proactive participation of our membership, in order to mobilize the country's energy to make progress on our objectives for development, particularly food security and sovereignty, industrial development and the energy problem. But also, and first of all, in the preparation for defense, the strengthening of our institutional order and the socialist state of law.

We will continue to work on laws required by the new Constitution and on the strengthening of socialist democracy, linked to social justice and equity; the full exercise of human rights; effective representation and participation of society in economic and social processes underway, directed toward a prosperous, democratic and sustainable socialism. All this in an environment increasingly free of the burdens of bureaucracy, excessive centralism and inefficiency.

Success in these efforts depends on our ability to dialogue with the population, to enthuse and involve all citizens and to rebuild values that give greater meaning and importance to social commitment. Conscious that democracy is more socialist to the extent that it is more participatory, it is up to us to stimulate popular participation, creating spaces and procedures to address, evaluate and implement the demands and proposals that make it effective.

This essential connection with the demands and needs of the people through participation is linked to one of the fundamental tasks of the Party in these times: social communication, still insufficiently understood, with the erroneous idea that it is a secondary matter given the urgency of economic and political issues. As if these urgencies were not, in some cases, the result of underestimating the specific importance of social communication.

The role of locals, cells and other party structures, internally and in their relationships with state and government bodies, mass organizations and civil society, must be that of a convener, a facilitator of exchange and revolutionary debate, stripped of formalism, impositions and superfluous directives. Revolutionary, because it springs from the concerns of those committed to improving and strengthening the process, ensuring that it is not detained or stuck.

We, members and non-members committed to Cuba's wellbeing, must advance the search for effective solutions, which in daily practice contribute, at the grassroots level, to a thorough understanding of our reality. Every person, every work collective, every mass organization counts. The battle is ours, it belongs to all of us and this is where we must concentrate our efforts. It is a matter of survival, of dignity, of decorum and of preserving the conquests we have won.

Compatriots:



The Revolution has given meaning to terms which we must not abandon in our desire to confront and transform the context: let us defend elegance, prestige, joy, decency, rights, efficiency, quality, culture of detail, beauty, virtue, honor, dignity and truth in everything we propose and do. On the basis of this Party practice, we must devote ourselves to advancing the re-ordering, the recovery, the consideration and strengthening of the ethical and moral values that have brought us this far, undoubtedly hard hit over the last decades by the adversities and successive periods of difficult circumstances.

In the face of the unjust international economic order imposed by bankrupt, discredited neoliberalism, Cuba maintains a line of action that inspires admiration, amazement and all manner of positive sentiments among those who yearn for a better global reality. Our conduct also increases the frustration, desperation and impotence of the northern neighbor and its acolytes, of the sellouts and annexationists, of the submissive and undignified who bow to the designs of the empire, all sworn enemies who are determined to devise the most perverse plans to attack the Revolution, create distrust and fracture our unity.

By tightening the economic siege, they seek to fabricate the image of a rigid, paralyzed, slow Revolution, which has no solutions or anything new to offer, incapable of promoting dialogue and defending participation, or providing happiness. They attempt to coopt our themes, words and phrases to paralyze wills, destroy sentiments and paradigms. Money flows in torrents to bury the Revolution.

We are not a closed society, nor is this revolutionary process weak, out-of-touch or stagnant. Over the course of 60 years we have consolidated an absolutely novel, challenging political project, in the midst of unimaginable pressure. And in order to perfect it, we have risen to the occasion, advanced and rectified errors many times.

In the ideological battle we must turn to Fidel, who taught us not only that culture is the first thing that must be saved, but that to save it we must maintain constant interaction with our intellectuals and artists.

He also taught us that this would not be a comfortable dialogue for the parties involved, but that it has been and must be a permanent, ongoing process, in which respect and willingness to work together are proven in practice.

The Revolution is not only unafraid of creative thought, but encourages it, cultivates it, opens fields for its growth and development, recognizes it and draws on its contributions. This is why a system of artistic education and cultural promotion was created, one which has served to protect and safeguard the most valuable of the tangible and intangible patrimony of Cuban creators, for all these years, even in the most difficult.

Learning in the arena of politics and ideology concerns all forces participating in a social process. What is unforgivable is not that mistakes

were made previously or are being made right now. What is unforgivable is not correcting them.

In this sense we have been consistent; we have rectified errors and the will to continue doing so exists, because it is critical to development in the field of ideas, as well as the economic and others.

A beautiful song, a duet by Silvio Rodríguez and Santiago Feliú, warns: "How much doubt is cast every time the lie wins!" Big media and digital social networks serve as effective platforms for limitless distortions and lies. With every person who doubts or shares a piece of false news, they score a small, but harmful victory.

It would be naive to pretend that the exponents of certain acts of an artistic political, or other nature, ignore or are not interested in considering the context. There is a fine, fragile line between an opportune act and an opportunist one, between the liberal and the chaotic, between independentists and neoannexionists, between transcendence and irresponsibility.

Their unwillingness to even acknowledge that the most radical right is viciously conspiring to eliminate our experience without thinking twice - and that if we perish as a project we will never again have the option of self-determination - is ultimately an act of criminal irresponsibility toward their country and their time.

We are no longer talking about cultural colonization, we are talking about an all-out war by the most conservative ultra-right, today desperate, ready to use any means, anxious to eliminate any site of progress, obsessed with destroying any leftist project.

They are sociopaths with digital technology always available, always at the ready, waging an open war against reason and sentiment. They attack, not a political system alone, but the true, urgent needs of humans, what connects us as a species. That is the most dangerous war, but also the most cowardly.

We cannot ignore that the enemies of the Revolution employ concepts of unconventional warfare against Cuba, a war in which everything that is banal, vulgar, indecent and false is fair game, although they attempt to get a foothold appealing to sensitivity, culture and thought.

The paladins of freedom, who traffic in values, of which they have no understanding, are attempting to dismantle a Revolution that has emancipated millions.

They shamelessly incite the desecration of symbols and the country's most sacred historical dates and places. They call for disobedience, disrespect, disorder and public indiscipline, accompanying these calls with the slanderous construction of pseudo-realities, bent on confusing, discouraging and promoting negativity.

The Cuban Revolution will not be betrayed or handed over to those who seek to live by playing with the fate of the homeland. (Applause) We will not allow the *artivistas* - as they call themselves, in quotation marks - of chaos, vulgarity, contempt, to defile the flag and insult authorities. We are not unaware that they desperately seek to be arrested, following the orders of those who pay them, who continue to find credible victims, taken in by their infamous reports from Cuba.

It's good to warn the mercenary lumpen profiting from the destiny of all - those who demand "invasion now," those who continually offend in word and deed those who do not rest - that the patience of this people has limits! (Prolonged applause)

Virtue will be in knowing how to close ranks in the defense of the homeland entrusted to us by those who have preceded us and brought us to the present.

Not even in the worst of situations can a Party member be a passive spectator of a provocation, or let a *compañera* or *compañero* in the ranks stand alone against provocateurs. The Revolution is defended by revolutionaries! (Applause) And among revolutionaries, we Communists go to the fore. (Applause) Never as an elite, but as a conscious, committed force. That means being and acting like a political vanguard. (Applause)

We must be proud to be part of the Party's ranks and understand membership as an act of consecration to the ideals that the organization defends with passion, joy, and responsibility.

It is time to understand and use all the resources of social communication, particularly work on digital networks, to deal with the issues impacting society; to interact and provide timely responses from all institution to which citizens turn; to promote participation, transparency and accountability; to make visible the spirit that moves the country.

We must take advantage of all communication platforms to fight our battle as revolutionaries, making the weight of history felt, our patriotic motivations and convictions heard, and the keys of collective leadership understood. We have the challenge of telling with our own voice all the good that has been done, as well as what can and should be done, showing our light and our commitment.

We live in an ordered, organized country, where we work hard to resist the blows of a hostile, suffocating reality, but which is determined to move forward toward greater social wellbeing. This truth must be heard every day through a steady stream of informative, educational and illustrative reports, describing every project, every scene of resistance and construction to overcome adversity.

Let's do this without being self-righteous, without boasting, offering contents based on the truth and virtue, on firmness and coherence, elegance and moderation, without tiresome speeches that provoke

rejection, with arguments and sentiments, sensitivity and empathy. With the language of those who resist on a daily basis, in that most intimate dimension of the homeland which is the neighborhood, the small plot of land, the community, the factory, the school, the construction site, and the family, closing the gap between institutional discourse and public demands.

The Revolution is real dialogue that puts truth and ethics before indecency and perversity, that does not negotiate its existence, does not legitimize mercenaries and acts with security and firmness.

Let us approach with objectivity progress made in the struggle for the emancipation of women, against gender violence, racism and discrimination, in favor of the care and protection of the environment and animals. And recognize that we need to advance further, to give increasingly more just responses to the people's concerns.

Let us practice a partisan and revolutionary militancy that actively confronts racist and discriminatory behavior and defends the rights of Cuban women.

Compañeras and compañeros:

Allow me now to say a few words about the crucial economic battle, without which all other battles can be futile.

The five-year period being evaluated by this Congress did not produce good economic results. This was also influenced by inefficiency and ineffectiveness in the performance of a significant portion of the enterprise system and the budgeted sector; structural problems exist that affect their development. Unresolved during the period were excessive, non-essential expenses and the lack of control of material and financial resources, as well as unnecessary obstacles and bureaucracy, among other evils that hinder our economic development, the solution of which depends on us.

Despite having faced difficulties of various kinds during this period, the economy has shown resilience, making it possible to preserve our social conquests, without renouncing the development goals set, or our solidarity and support to other peoples.

Cuba has given a magnificent lesson of how political will; the Revolution's humanist vocation; government management; public policies that put human beings at the center; dialogue between our principal decision makers and scientists; and the people's participation can, with relative success, confront a complex problem like the pandemic.

A small country without resources, besieged and cruelly blockaded, has achieved results indicative of a better performance than that of many countries in the world and the region. This work is sustained by the economy we criticize to improve it and make it more efficient, but that has made possible inclusive social gains that are clearly significant.

The Party reiterates that we are not satisfied with maintaining the country's potential strength at a survival level. On the contrary, we aspire to resist

creatively, without renouncing our development projects, perfecting them, updating their concepts, modernizing ways of doing and participating.

In the shortest possible time, on the basis of our own efforts, recognizing that the path lies within ourselves, with the least possible external dependence, we must meet the challenge of producing the food we need, make better use of renewable energy sources, develop our tourism potential with quality and sustainability, improve the efficiency in the investment process, direct national production to meet the demands of the domestic market, and provide better quality services to the population.

There are basic concepts in any type of economy, which we must definitively instate, like savings and the circular economy. Eliminating the import mentality is also imperative.

To overcome the crisis, it is necessary to dynamize the process of updating the economic and social model and implementation of the Strategy and the National Economic and Social Development Plan through 2030, establishing a flexible relationship between necessary planning, decentralization and the autonomy essential for local development, with the participation of all economic actors, including state enterprises, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and cooperatives.

That is, we will resist, creatively, with deep, objective analysis of each situation, summoning expert knowledge, promoting popular participation and innovation. Of course, without renouncing our internationalist principles of solidarity and cooperation with humanity.

The Ordering Task, not always well understood, even by those who have the responsibility of executing it, will immediately demand a great deal of political work, given the highly complex process it is.

Questions have been raised about whether this was the right time to launch the re-ordering, in the midst of the unexpected challenges imposed by the pandemic and the escalation of the blockade. There is only one answer: we could no longer postpone this transformation intended to stimulate development and the articulated participation of all economic actors.

It is only honest to acknowledge that the re-ordering has presented problems of implementation, due to insufficient preparation of some directors and inadequate interpretation of the regulations, but misunderstandings have also emerged based on the mistake of associating this process with problems that were present before its implementation. To this must be added dissatisfaction generated by argumentation that was not always timely or precise, plus some inadmissible demands, which are far removed from the principles guiding the task.

Compatriots

Our first response has been to provide follow up and immediate solutions - whenever possible - to the critical issues raised by the population, promoting an important exercise of citizen participation, which cannot be

ignored, evident in adjustments, corrections and changes implemented. Rates, prices and the most recent measures to favor and stimulate the production and commercialization of foodstuffs are part of this strategy.

Once again we appeal to the necessary change of mentality that can facilitate these efforts. It is time to move from making the call to transformation.

We will win to the extent that the goal of everything we do is always the greatest possible happiness of Cubans, defended on the basis of the essence of our socialism.

The current situation and the objectives which emerged from our debates represent a very great challenge for Cuban leaders. Society and its institutions need cadres, with a profoundly ethical and professional preparation, distinguished by qualities including revolutionary dissatisfaction, sensitivity to the people's problems, the disposition to devote oneself, and the ability to face adversity with creativity that inspires and motivates innovation.

In any situation, but especially in the most difficult and challenging, our cadres must stand out for their dedication to the task, their eagerness to improve, their modesty and sufficient sensitivity to put themselves in the place of others, putting the "we" before the "I." They have the responsibility to dialogue sincerely, from the heart, and be quick to incorporate these perceptions in decision making.

The Congress has approved a strategy for the preparation of cadres that will include a scientific approach in their selection, training and promotion, and will take into account a gradual transition involving different responsibilities.

### Compatriots

The blockade and the pandemic have come together in the last year to put our projections and dreams on hold. We have been struggling hard against the daily difficulties and, although at times it might seem that we will not be able to get by, in the midst of uncertainty, we are suddenly assaulted and dazzled by our own capacity for resistance and creation.

The fact that a country blockaded to a perverse limit has managed to sustain the vitality of its basic services, treat the entire population of infected and suspect cases, install more than twenty molecular biology laboratories in record time, design and develop national prototypes of pulmonary ventilators and diagnostic kits, and develop five candidate vaccines, planning to produce enough doses to immunize the entire population and contribute to other nations, in addition to providing meritorious, recognized medical collaboration to several peoples of the world, is much more than a light at the end of the tunnel. It is proof that we are on the right side of history and that our revolutionary socialist

project has so much potential and reach that not even the greatest empire of all time has been able to demolish.

Our people have given this unquestionable feat a name: Fidel Castro Ruz! (Applause)

The Comandante en jefe, under Martí's precept that to govern is to foresee, in very uncertain days for Cuba, promoted the development of biotechnology, the production of pharmaceuticals and vaccines, and the training of doctors for the nation and the world. He, who saw earlier and farther, as far as humanity can project its dreams, is a continuous reference, at a time when, before the astonished eyes of many, Cuba emerges saving itself and contributing to saving the world from the worse pandemic in centuries.

At a time when women and men in white lab coats, members of the Henry Reeve brigade, descend the stairs of an airplane carrying the single starred flag out front, intent on saving lives without putting a price on their work, the lies and slanders attacking Cuba begin to dissolve like ice in hot water and our truth is multiplied by this redeeming action.

Compatriots from all of Cuba, everyday militants of the Revolution: members of the Political Bureau, the Secretariat and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba elected today assume the extraordinary commitment to give continuity to the Cuban Revolution. (Applause)

After several years of work and dedication to Party tasks, we bid farewell to several compañeras and compañeros who in their respective roles are part of all that the country has undertaken and achieved under challenging conditions in recent years. They all take with them the best of recognitions: to have worked at the highest levels of the Party founded and led by Fidel, Raúl and other compañeras and compañeros of the historic centenary generation, including Comandantes de la Revolución Ramiro Valdés and Guillermo García, who continue every day to give us lessons in devotion and dedication to the common work. (Applause)

To Rebel Army Comandante José Ramón Machado Ventura (applause), who for dozens of years carried on his shoulders difficult tasks of the organization, its functioning and internal life, the control of resources and administration, we offer our permanent gratitude for his dedication and example, for his discipline and loyalty. For his teachings, support and confidence in those of us who have moved, step by step, from grassroots student and youth organizations to leadership tasks. His straight-forwardness, his modesty and commitment will always accompany us as lessons of life (Applause).

As for the Army General, the Congress of Continuity wishes to place on record our enormous debt to a man who will never be able to separate himself from the Party of which he is a founder.

Summarizing his contributions to the Revolution, as I did at the beginning of my remarks, is not only the duty of comrades. It is a way of reminding ourselves of the principal qualities of a leader, of an authentic revolutionary, always unsatisfied with the work he leads and attentive to the social beat, sensitive to everything that serves or harms the people.

Intransigent and firm when it comes to confronting the adversary and defending the work. Sincere and affectionate when he encourages, recognizes, rewards, or even reprimands a comrade in battle.

Continuity is affirmed by example and within the teachings of the authentic leaders who have preceded us, always evident in the timely, heartfelt recognition of those who give their all for the collective good.

Compañero Army General, Minister or simply Raúl, as the people call him, on behalf of my compañeras and compañeros and the Cuban people: Thank you for your example, your drive, your strength and your confidence! (Applause) Thank you for being there and helping us believe in ourselves.

Important, very important, was your support and encouragement during these years of learning and training that today allow us to assume responsibilities in which you and Fidel made history. The challenge is tremendous, but we have the peace of mind that the school is close, that you are by our side. (Applause)

Compañeras and compañeros:

What is happening today places us once again before the thread of history. It is April 19, the day of the Girón victory, that first fight against the mercenaries of the empire which wanted to surprise the Revolution but was surprised. The declaration of the socialist character of the Revolution on the eve of those battles, Fidel's courage and genius shining in the organization of the battle, ensuring that it lasted less than 72 hours and preventing the establishment of a beachhead, the image of our leader atop a tank in action, always in front of his troops, have returned, on the occasion of the date, to remind us who we are, where we come from and where we are going. (Applause)

The Communist Party of Cuba is indissolubly linked to that symbol of resistance and to the victory that awaits those who fight fair for the rights of their peoples and claim nothing more than a place in the vanguard.

Our generation understands the responsibility we assume in accepting this challenge and declares before the historic generation our honor and pride in giving continuity to the Revolution. (Applause) We do so guided by the principle immortalized by Maceo, "...Whoever attempts to appropriate Cuba, will gather the dust of its soil, drenched in blood, if he does not perish in the struggle."

Paraphrasing Camilo in his well-known words to Fidel upon receiving the rank of Rebel Army Comandante in the Sierra Maestra, we would like to say to the historic generation, to our fellow Party members and our beloved



people: Thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve this most worthy cause for which we will always be ready to give our lives... It would be easier to stop breathing than to stop being true to your confidence! (Applause).

We are Cuba!

Cuba lives!

Homeland or Death!

Venceremos!

(Applause)

# **We Are Going To Put Heart In Our Common Work**

**Speech held during a revolutionary reaffirmation event (July 17, 2021)**

Dear Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, leader of the Cuban Revolution;

People of Cuba, Cuban men and women;

Compatriots:

Long live free Cuba! (Exclamations of: Viva!)

Free from foreign interference and free from the hatred incited by those who for 60 years have attempted to asphyxiate the nation and provoke a social explosion, and now presenting themselves as our saviors.

Stop the lies, the infamy and the hatred. Cuba is absolutely allergic to hatred, and it will never be a land of hate! Nothing good can be built with hate. Hatred robs us of time to love and of love itself, if we let it in, as a reaction to the hatred of our adversaries.

We have experienced it during these days of hate inundating us on social networks, not so "social" networks, with which parents and children have kept company throughout these long months of pandemic, to the point that many spend more time connected to the internet than their families; that family, which, with unity, can be invulnerable to anything that threatens.

A mother was telling me yesterday that her teenage daughter had asked, with tears in her eyes, if this was Cuba, when she saw the images of violent acts shared by some friends on Facebook.

The owners of these networks, the dictators with their algorithms, as a recent documentary denounces, have opened the floodgates of their powerful platforms to hate, without a minimum of ethical control.

This is hatred that divides families, friends, society, and threatens to sweep many of our values into the corner of the useless.

The images bombarding us with violence, blood, protests, shouting, vandalism, threats, harassment and repression have continued without pause over the last six days.

During previous weeks, an intense political-communications operation was mounted by an articulated platform of media poison, financed by the U.S. government and by the state of Florida's political machinery.

Its objective was to encourage disturbances and instability in the country, taking advantage of the difficult conditions caused by the pandemic, the tightened blockade and the Trump administration's 243 additional measures

During those days, acts of unconventional warfare were committed, including calls for a social explosion, violence, aggression against police agents, vandalism and sabotage.

To accomplish this, they used artificial intelligence and Big Data systems, cyber-troops and cyber-terrorism to promote the fabrication of homemade weapons and incendiary devices, articulated harassment, coercion and financing of digital “leaders” and international influencers.

This was facilitated by the complicity of a powerful transnational that allowed their own regulations to be violated with impunity, disregarding the legitimate complaints of users and some press media and cable agencies.

Cuban television has made the objectives of this campaign abundantly clear by reconstructing the sequence of events that occurred last Sunday.

First the protests were called, then a false account of the events was constructed to generate emotional reactions of solidarity with the demonstrators, and then the vandalism was unleashed, which occurred hours before our improvised appearance on television, after returning from San Antonio de los Baños.

The route of this outrage is clear. After the fact, the events were presented out of order, as if they were the result of our legitimate call for revolutionaries to defend the Revolution.

An attempt was made to tell the story backward. What I may have said didn’t matter; the calls for unity, peace and solidarity made by many, do not count. The ill-intentioned interpretation is that a civil war was called.

We can take apart the so-called fake news, expose the lies, show how a completely false reality of Cuba was fabricated on virtual platforms, but they have already caused immeasurable damage to the national soul, which has among its most sacred values citizen tranquility, coexistence, solidarity and unity.

We are under fire from sophisticated cyber-warfare that includes cyber-terrorism and media terrorism in its aggressive toolkit

The denunciations made by Cuba’s Foreign Minister last Tuesday (July 13) have not been answered. There has not been even an attempted response by authorities of the Republican government in Florida, regarding funds allocated to these projects, with which they intend to attack our country and, at the same time, disarm us of any possible means of defense.

Not only the Foreign Ministry, but also the websites of the Presidency, the popular news and analysis portal covering Cuba’s reality Cubadebate, Granma, Juventud Rebelde and practically all Cuban public media are suffering intermittent attacks with denial of services in the midst of an atrocious campaign to demonize the government.

They are trying to silence any alternative to the anti-Cuban narrative that today is displayed on alarmist front pages. Friends of Cuba, who know and

suffer the manipulation and the silence, are unable to access Cuban media and have sent us reports of access denial.

Taking the lies to new heights, false images are used, already well documented by our journalists, inciting and glorifying contempt of authority and destruction of property, encouraging assaults and threatening harassment of citizens and families.

Right now, what the world is seeing of Cuba is a lie, an entire people rising up against the government and a government repressing its people.

It is not strange that, under such a media barrage, some doubt and make statements assuming division that does not exist.

I do not judge, I do not condemn. I understand that the adversary's weapons are overwhelming, but on the side of the people, with the people and for the people, the Revolution continues to stand! (Applause and exclamations of: Long live the Revolution! Long live Diaz-Canel! Long live the people! Down with the Yankees! Down with the blockade!)

Not with statements, but with deeds. As the #SOSMatanzas hashtag was fading in cyberspace, the promoters of a humanitarian intervention were nowhere to be seen, on the side of Matanzas and all of Cuba. The same noble, solidary people were still present, suffering the consequences of the blockade, and the Cuban government was there.

Who was not shocked to learn that vandals of the worst kind had stoned the children's ward of the Cárdenas hospital, forcing children and mothers to seek refuge in the bathrooms or under beds at the institution?

Over the days to come, many personal stories must be told about the popular reaction to the attacks and harassment; about how much the forces of order were obliged to restrain themselves, given the care required of them to avoid excesses; but make no mistake: the majority of the people, the same people exhausted and irritated by the shortages, who demand better government management, also demand an end to violence (Applause and exclamations of Long live our doctors!)

Compatriots:

No lie has emerged by chance or because of a mistake. Everything is coldly calculated according to the unconventional warfare manual. The indecent representative of the oas, the Ministry of Colonies, which we are honored to not be a part of, has already spoken.

We are not speculating. Some speak so that others may issue statements later. There it is, lying in wait, the hard right wing of the U.S. Congress sharpening its teeth and demanding that its political adversaries in the current administration take action against Cuba, convene the Security Council, warning that any attempt of massive emigration to its shores constitutes a hostile act and a threat to the sacrosanct National Security of the empire.

None of this is new. They have tried it before. It is their way of putting the adversary administration against the ropes, and attempting to force them to achieve the never-met objective of wiping off the map the bad example of this small Island, determined to remain sovereign and independent, when so many others bow down to their orders (Exclamations of: Let those born and those to be born know, we were born to win and not to be defeated! Applause)

Almost along with our mother's milk, our parents instilled in us Martí's alert: "Men go in two camps: those who love and found, and those who hate and destroy," the Apostle told us.

Cuba will continue founding! Cuba is doing so right now, with the first two vaccines in Latin America: Abdala and Soberana (Applause and exclamations of: Long live Cuban medicine! Viva!). She is doing so with another piece of news that the malicious want to hide: the one hundred percent efficacy in preventing serious symptoms or death, shown in the third phase of Abdala's clinical trials. (Applause and exclamations of: Viva!)

When a people has come so far in the realization of its dreams and in the conquest of rights, which for half the planet are only a pipedream, neither violence nor fear can stop them.

None of this that we denounce today excuses us from the obligation to conduct self-criticism, complete pending rectifications, reconsider thoroughly our methods and styles of work that clash with the will to serve the people, due to the bureaucracy, the obstacles and the insensitivity of some that is so damaging.

Today I come to reiterate the commitment to work for and demand the fulfillment of the program we have given ourselves as a government and as a people, reviewed in light of possible mistakes committed during these years of intense pressure, particularly, the last two.

Compatriots:

We are not gathering here this morning on a capricious whim, in the midst of a complex epidemiological situation. Respecting sanitary measures and physical distancing as much as possible, we have called you here to denounce once again the blockade, the aggression and the terror. We could not delay this meeting; the enemy has once again launched an all-out attack to destroy the sacred unity and tranquility of our citizens.

We reaffirm that Cuba belongs to all! (Applause and exclamations of: Long live Cuba! Long live Cubans!" Long live unity! Long live Raúl! Long live Díaz-Canel!) We will triumph!

I am sharing with you sentiments and reflections, emotions, disposition and convictions (Applause and exclamations of: (Ready) for whatever, Díaz-Canel, for whatever!)

We can only have more if we create more. We will achieve what we set out to do by pushing the work forward together. We have the immense example of Cuban science, which proposed and achieved in record time, and with hardly any resources, two vaccines and other candidate vaccines that allow us to face the future with hopes that other peoples do not have.

If we have been able to do something so huge and difficult, what can we not do in other areas?

And, above all, how much more can we do if we articulate pending dialogues, recover social work, promote greater attention to vulnerable sectors, to neighborhoods, supported by the experience of the work bequeathed to us by the Comandante en Jefe, in years as challenging as these; this is what Gerardo called for.

The Cuban Revolution erased forever the seeds of evil, hatred, dishonor and crime. It is important, therefore, that we seek the deep causes of the violence that is boiling below the surface, given the unmet needs, and complete the pending task of ensuring that the gene of the brave, the honest, the just, the honorable, the joyful children of this Cuban land prevails in Cuba's heritage (Applause and exclamations of: Down with the blockade! Down with imperialist aggression!) "Only love turns mud into a miracle/ Only love illuminates that which endures," we have sung a thousand times with Silvio, evoking Martí.

We are going to put heart into the common work, a heart as big as our difficulties! Together we can! (Applause and exclamations of "Together we can, together we can, together we can, together we can!")

Long live sovereign, independent and socialist Cuba! (Exclamations of: Viva!)

Cuba of love, Cuba of peace, Cuba of unity, Cuba of solidarity! (Exclamations of: Viva!) Cuba for all Cubans, who, wherever they are, work to see her advance on our own legs, with our own arms. toward a destiny of prosperity, which is possible! (Exclamations of: Viva!)

Put some heart into Cuba! Heart to the homeland, to the Revolution, to socialism!

We will win! (Exclamations of: We will win, we will win, we will win! Together we can, together we can!)

## **Statement At The UN General Assembly**

### **Statement at the 76<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the UN General Assembly (September 23, 2021)**

Mr. Secretary General;

Mr. President;

We are living uncertain times. Under the demolishing impact of a pandemic that has worsened structural inequities and the global crisis, the role of multilateralism and the United Nations becomes ever more important. And international cooperation has been insufficient.

The implementation of neo-liberal formulas for decades has been reducing States' capabilities to meet the needs of their populations.

The most vulnerable have been left unprotected, while rich nations, the elites and the pharmaceutical transnational corporations have continued to profit.

Not only it is urgent that we unite our wills and pool our efforts for the wellbeing of humanity. It is morally imperative

More than 4.5 million people have died because of the pandemic, which has worsened the living conditions in this planet. Its sequels and impact on societies today are incalculable, but it is already known that they will not be ephemeral.

It has been so pointed out by the "2021 Sustainable Development Goals Report", while according to the International Labor Organization forecasts, there will be 205 million people unemployed in the world by 2022.

It is widely believed that the sustainable development goal of eradicating poverty by 2030, by which date the global poverty rate is projected to be 7 per cent, or around 600 million people, is already seriously compromised.

In the midst of this bleak prospect, Covid-19 vaccines have emerged as a hope. In August of 2021, more than 5 billion doses had been administered globally; however, more than 80 per cent of them were applied in middle or high income countries, even when they account for much less than one half of the world's population.

Hundreds of millions of persons in low-income countries are still waiting to receive their first dose and cannot even estimate when or if they will ever receive it.

At the same time, it is hard to believe that the world's military budget in the year 2020 amounted to almost 2 trillion USD.

How many lives would have been saved should those resources had been invested in health or the manufacturing and distribution of vaccines?

The possible answers to this question involve changing the paradigm and transforming the unequal and antidemocratic international order that subordinates the legitimate aspirations of millions of persons to the selfish attitudes and narrow interests of a minority becomes an imperative.

We will never tire of repeating that the squandering of natural resources and the irrational capitalist patterns of production and consumption, which depredate the environment and cause the climate change that jeopardizes the existence of the human species should cease.

There must be a collective effort; but developed countries, the main responsible for the current situation, which own all the resources that are needed, have the moral obligation to take responsibility.

It is necessary to struggle so that solidarity, cooperation and mutual respect prevail if we are to provide an effective response to the needs and aspirations of all peoples and preserve what is most valuable: human life and dignity.

Our peoples have the right to live in peace and security; they have the right to development, wellbeing and social justice. A revitalized, democratized and strengthened United Nations is called to play a key role in this effort.

Mr. President;

A dangerous international schism, permanently headed and instigated by the United States, is being promoted.

Through the pernicious use and abuse of economic coercive measures, which have become the instrument defining the foreign policy of the United States, the government of that country threatens, extorts and pressure sovereign States so that they speak and act against those it has identified as adversaries.

It forces its allies to create coalitions to overthrow legitimate governments; break trade agreements; abandon and prohibit certain technologies and adopt unjustified judicial measures against citizens from the countries that refuse to submit.

It often uses the term "international community" to refer to the small group of governments that tend to irretrievably follow Washington's dictates. The rest of the countries, which account for the overwhelming majority of this Organization, seem to have no place in the "international community" definition advocated by the United States.

It is a kind of behavior associated to ideological and cultural intolerance, with a remarkable racist influence and hegemonic ambition purposes. It is neither possible nor acceptable to identify the right of a nation to economic and technological development as a threat; nor is it possible to question the right of every State to develop the political, economic, social and cultural system that has been sovereignly chosen by its people.



In short, today we are witnessing the implementation of unacceptable political practices in the international context that go against the universal commitment to uphold the Charter of the United Nations, including the sovereign right to self-determination. Independent and sovereign states are being driven under multiple pressures to force them to subordinate to the will of Washington and to an order based on its capricious rules.

Mr. President;

For more than 60 years, the US government has not ceased for a single minute in its attacks against Cuba. However, at this crucial and challenging moment for all nations, its aggressiveness exceeds all limits.

The most cruel and longest-lasting economic, commercial and financial blockade ever applied against any nation, has been opportunistically and criminally tightened during the pandemic; and the current democratic administration maintains unchanged the 243 coercive measures adopted by the Donald Trump administration, including Cuba's inclusion in the spurious and immoral list of countries allegedly sponsoring terrorism

It is in this context that an Unconventional War is launched against our country, to which the US Government has allocated, in a public and notorious manner, millions through manipulation campaigns and lies, with the use of the new information technologies and other digital platforms, in order to portray, internally and externally, an absolutely false image of the Cuban reality, sow confusion, destabilize and discredit the country and vindicate the 'change of regime' doctrine.

They have done everything to erase the Cuban Revolution from the political map to the world. They accept no alternatives to the model they conceive for their own backyard.

Their plan is perverse and incompatible (as) with the democracy and freedom they advocate.

But our enemies must be clear that we will not give away the Homeland and the Revolution that several generations of patriots bequeathed to us by standing their ground. Today I would like to reiterate before the respectable and real community of nations that every year votes almost unanimously against the blockade, what Army General Raúl Castro expressed some years ago: "...Cuba is not afraid of lies, nor does it give in to pressures, conditions or impositions, wherever these may come..."

Mr. President;

We are not daunted by the colossal challenges. We will continue to create for Cuba.

We offer selfless solidarity to those who need our support and we also gratefully receive it from friendly governments and peoples and the Cuban community abroad. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for

your support at this juncture, which dignifies humanity values and unconditional international cooperation without any interference.

At the same time, in response to the requests received and guided by its profound fraternal and humanistic vocation, Cuba has sent more than 4 900 cooperation workers, organized into 57 medical brigades, to 40 countries and territories affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our dedicated health workers have not had a minute of rest in the struggle against the pandemic inside and outside Cuba.

They are the same who took to the streets to assist the brother people of Haiti after the devastating earthquake that shook that country hardly a few weeks ago. Those who travel from the most remote places to a Cuban province go, without dusting off the dust of the road, to deliver their expertise and knowledge to the mission of saving lives.

They are much more than everyday heroes; they are the pride of our nation and a symbol of its vocation for justice. Dozens of personalities and thousands of people have signed their candidacy for the Nobel Peace Prize.

We also take pride in the Cuban scientific community which, despite huge scarcities, created three vaccines and two candidate vaccines against the COVID-19 pandemic. They represent the realization of the idea expressed by Commander in Chief of the Cuban Revolution in 1960, who asserted that the future of our homeland must necessarily be a future of men and women of science.

Thanks to the support of our men and women of science and the health staff, during the first 10 days of this month, more than 15.8 million doses of the vaccines Abdala, Soberana 02 and Soberana Plus have been administered; and 37.8 per cent of the Cuban population is fully vaccinated.

We expect to achieve full immunization by the end of 2021, which will make it possible for us to advance in the struggle against the new outbreak of the pandemic.

Mr. President;

We ratify our aspiration to achieve the full independence of Our America and a socially and economically integrated Latin American and Caribbean region, capable of living up to the commitment established in the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, in the face of the attempts to re-impose the Monroe Doctrine and neo-colonial domination.

We are opposed to every attempt to destabilize and subvert the constitutional order and the civic and military unity and destroy the work that was initiated by Commander Hugo Chávez Frías and continued by President Nicolás Maduro Moros in favor of the Venezuelan people.

We reiterate that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela will always be able to count on Cuba's solidarity.

We ratify our firm support to the brother people of Nicaragua and its National Reconciliation and Unity Government, led by Commander Daniel Ortega, who are courageously and proudly defending the achievements attained against the threats and interventionist actions of the US government.

We support the Caribbean nations' claim for fair reparations for the horrors caused by slavery and slave trade. We likewise support their right to a just, special and differentiated treatment, which is indispensable to meet the challenges resulting from climate change, natural disasters, the unjust international financial system and the difficult conditions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We reaffirm that the brother people of Puerto Rico should be free and independent after more than a century of submission to colonial dominance.

We stand in solidarity with the Republic of Argentina in its just claim for its sovereign rights over the Malvinas, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas.

We reiterate our commitment to peace in Colombia. We are convinced that a political solution and a dialogue between the parties is the appropriate way to achieve it.

We also call for an end to foreign interference in Syria and full respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity, while we support the search for a peaceful and negotiated solution to the situation imposed on that sister nation.

We call for a just, comprehensive, all-encompassing and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict, which includes the end of the Israeli occupation of the usurped Palestinian territories and the exercise of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to build its own State within the pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

We condemn the unilateral coercive measures imposed against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

We reaffirm our unswerving solidarity with the Saharan people.

We strongly condemn the unilateral and unjust sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

We reiterate our unshakable support to the "one China" principle and oppose any attempt to harm the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of China, as well as any interference in its internal affairs.

We reject the attempts to expand NATO's presence up to the Russian borders; the interference in Russia's affairs with regard to its sovereignty and the imposition of unilateral and unjust sanctions against that country.

We call for an end to foreign interference in the internal affairs of the Republic of Belarus and reiterate our solidarity with President Alexander Lukashenko and the brother people of Belarus.

The United Nations cannot ignore the lessons learned in Afghanistan. It took two decades of occupation, a toll of thousands of deadly casualties, 10 million displaced and billions of dollars in costs – which turn into profits for the military-industrial complex – to reach the conclusion that terrorism cannot be prevented or fought with bombs; that occupation only leads to destruction and that no country has the right to impose its will on sovereign nations. Afghanistan is not an isolated case.

It became obvious that wherever the United States intervenes, instability, death and hardships increase, leaving behind long-lasting scars.

Mr. President;

We ratify Cuba's determination to continue speaking the truth in a transparent way, however much this might be upsetting to some; defending the principles and values we believe in; supporting just causes; confronting violations as much as we have confronted foreign aggressions, colonialism, racism and apartheid and struggling ceaselessly for the greatest possible justice, prosperity and development of our peoples, who deserve a better world.

Thank you, very much.

# **We Are Ready And Willing To Do Everything To Defend What Is Most Sacred And What Unites Us**

## **Speech during the Central Committee's Second Plenum closing session (October 24, 2021)**

Dear Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, leader of the Cuban Revolution; Compañero and compañeras, members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba;

Guests:

For almost two days the second plenum of the PCC Central Committee has met, the first one following the Congress, since, you will remember, the first plenary session was held during the Congress, and that it was postponed due to the occurrence of a resurgence of the pandemic, which has required us to focus on aspects concerning the functioning of the Party in giving continuity to the Congress, and also address current issues of the Party's work.

We have addressed the implementation of Eighth Congress agreements; the modification of statutes; norms for the functioning of permanent commissions; the strategy for implementation of the cadre policy, the program for transformation of political-ideological work; the process of evaluation of PCC committees; and the program of digital transformation of the organization.

In addition, the political assurance of important processes to be undertaken, and necessary debate on the improvement of People's Power, were discussed.

The complexity of the present moment implies the need for us to meet more frequently to debate and make decisions on the most urgent and strategic problems the country currently faces, especially if we are able to discuss the issues in depth, objectively, comprehensively, and in a critical manner, in order to find solutions to the complex problems that concern us. This spirit was evident during this second plenum, as the Army General stated.

An analysis of the country's situation and the global situation shows us that the world in COVID-19 is not only the unjust world that revolutionaries dream of changing. It is that world, but now under the effects of many simultaneous crises: economic, labor, productive, environmental, sanitary and also moral crises.

Cuba has not escaped the critical conjuncture facing the planet; undoubtedly, we are not the most affected, but we are the most punished. No underdeveloped nation is burdened as we are with the aforementioned crises along with the conditions imposed by the economic blockade, reinforced and intensified with 243 measures imposed by Trump and maintained by Biden, in addition to facing an intense, blatant and

perverse communicational war. We are the only people in the world facing punishment this cruel, for this long.

It is up to us to give a worthy response to this undeserved, immoral sentence. Our originality is obliged to be as great as the wickedness of our adversary. We are challenged to be exceptional in our ability to resist and create. This is how it has been since the beginnings of the Cuban nation; this is how the Cuban Revolution has resisted 62 years undefeated. The enemy has not ceased in its efforts to destroy us and cannot forgive the audacity of younger generations to continue the will and commitment to maintaining our independence, sovereignty and the construction of socialism.

The stated objective of the U.S. government is to overthrow the Cuban Revolution.

The enemy's hope is that our great material difficulties will weaken the people and bring them to their knees; that are why they promote the idea that the country cannot resist.

This U.S. administration is trapped by the desire to win the Florida vote and these electoral purposes condition its policy toward Cuba, which has become dominated by the Cuban-American mafia in Miami. These facts are not coincidental; there is an intention, premeditation, and political interest. The imperialist strategy is to create maximum discontent within our country. To foment instability through the erosion of the population's living conditions, make it more and more difficult for us to survive, in order to lead us to the eruption of a violent conflict. They intend to fill us with hatred and take away our happiness.

The campaign is malicious; they disparage our achievements, disseminate grossly distorted images of our reality, attempt to strangle us economically, undermine solidarity with Cuba, making use of lies and slander. Representatives of the U.S. government constantly make human rights accusations against Cuba in their social network posts, keeping the issue in high profile.

Reflecting the current situation of bilateral relations with the United States, the U.S. embassy in Cuba has been playing an active role in efforts to subvert the internal order of our country. This behavior is not new; it has always been the norm in one way or another since the establishment of the interest sections in 1977.

In contrast, although our mission in Washington carries out intense political and diplomatic work in favor of bilateral relations, in terms of lifting the economic blockade, showing the truth of our reality and counteracting slanders against Cuba, it can be categorically stated that there has never been any illegal activity aimed at undermining the political, legal or constitutional foundations of that country.

The record of our Embassy and of our former Interests Section is absolutely spotless.

U.S. diplomatic officials frequently meet with leaders of the counterrevolution, to whom they provide guidance, encouragement, logistical and financial support. In their communication platforms, including digital networks. On a daily basis, they issue offensive statements that constitute open interference in the internal affairs of our country. This is provocative behavior, far removed from what should be the conduct of a diplomatic mission and in total violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, which has among its pillars that diplomats will respect the laws of the country where they are accredited and refrain from passing judgment on its internal affairs.

The U.S. embassy seeks out information to defame Cuba on issues like human rights, democracy and social contradictions in our country. They attempt to identify and promote leaders, especially youth, training them abroad with the goal of using them to promote their anti-socialist, pro-capitalist and neo-liberal ideas.

We will not stand idly by in the face of such behavior. We are determined to confront the subversive and aggressive work of this diplomatic representation, including public denunciation. We have the experience of many years of diplomatic and operative work dealing with the United States under the guidance of the historic leadership of the Revolution, and we also have the support of state institutions, political and mass organizations which, under the guidance of the Party, play an important role in this battle. We have as powerful tools unity, discipline, organization, agreed-upon work strategies, the necessary procedures and ideological clarity.

This is an appropriate moment to also make some remarks about the so-called July 11 events, which were nothing more than provocations and acts of vandalism as part of this entire strategy of non-conventional war and a "soft coup" against our Revolution.

This is about maintaining a narrative that seeks to present July 11 as a turning point of rupture and popular rejection of the Revolution, and attempts to take advantage of the existing dissatisfaction to provoke destabilization; but July 11 was not evidence of rupture, it was, in fact, evidence of unity, and July 11 was one more victory for the Cuban Revolution. Revolutionaries came out to defend the Revolution with high morale, ready to fight and win.

They believed that the Revolution could be overthrown in a matter of hours, just as they thought when the socialist camp collapsed, but once again they were mistaken.

We have also learned some lessons from these events and from what we have lived throughout this last year and a half of pandemic. One of these lessons is that we must defend, and assume as strength, the heterogeneity of Cuban society, and this implies, as we have discussed here,

differentiated political-ideological work. We must strengthen and develop mechanisms of popular participation and work with the population, which cannot be discarded in any adverse situation we may face, and that our revolutionary guard, revolutionary vigilance can never be neglected. The reference, in fact, is the Eighth Party Congress. During that great event of our organization, the causes of all the problems that the country is experiencing were analyzed, the strategies and also proposals for work to confront them were addressed, and that is the true reference point! The country has lived through other difficult moments over the course of the Revolution, and this is not the most complex of those moments. The idea is to create the state of opinion that nothing works, that everything functions poorly, and deny the work of social justice we have achieved. This is why we must encourage critical analysis of our reality, self-criticism, and move away from complacency, emphasizing the need to communicate in a more timely, better manner, and ensuring that all our work structures listen, dialogue, provide answers and solutions.

It is important to prioritize work in attention to and dialogue with youth, which must be a priority, along with the need to propose and implement measures to support solving problems by perfecting the methods of attention to the population.

As we are doing, it is important to revitalize social work in communities, where the social base of support for our Revolution lies, crafting and developing a genuine, inclusive, democratic and participatory process that defends the concept of people's power we were discussing here, to reach consensus on how we can exercise it. These issues are distinguishing elements of our unity, our capacity for resistance and our dignity. Amidst these difficulties, the country is moving forward; we have the courage to face them and the capacity to find solutions. We cannot be discouraged, because peoples who are discouraged, as Fidel said, do not get far, they are victims of confusion and headed for failure. This will not be the case of the Cuban Revolution. We are winning this battle by defending and developing the ideas of socialism; within our people we have tremendous power of intelligence, creativity, innovation, initiative, tenacity, firmness, consciousness, patriotism and revolutionary spirit. We have the obligation to move forward, and they, the imperialists, will learn a new lesson if they underestimate us.

We must remember what the Comandante en Jefe said when we were living in the times of the Special Period: "We bear our difficulties and our shortages with dignity, with the dignity of those who do not give up, with the dignity of those who will never get down on their knees." This is why we are going to emerge victorious from this battle, under difficult conditions, against an empire rife with arrogance and frustration. Struggle is the way to overcome obstacles and problems, not surrendering to the designs of those who cynically and shamelessly are the main cause of these problems, making no concessions that violate our principles, never ceding our independence or sovereignty. These are difficult times, but also



times of prospects for new opportunities to grow and surpass ourselves. We have a great responsibility as generations, the challenge of saving the Revolution and saving the Cuban nation.

There are serious objective problems, there are shortages, circumstances like these, as Fidel also warned us, are ripe for opportunism, cowardly acts, inconsistency, desertions, betrayals, weakness, cowardice, which requires more from the Party's work. We cannot be satisfied with what has been done, but we cannot accuse the Revolution of being inept or incompetent, because the problems we are confronting, amongst all of us, are truly big. In the midst of this situation our national pride grows, when we win victories, like our scientists giving us vaccines; when in the midst of a complex situation we are able to carry out an intense legislative program; when we have a proposal for a truly inclusive and modern Families Code; when we open the way for new economic actors; when we are engaged in neighborhood revitalization and exchanges during meetings with a variety of social sectors in our country. We can irrefutably affirm that the majority of our people accompany and support the Revolution (Applause).

Under these circumstances and given the failure of their plans, new plots continue to be hatched. Now they are appearing with an allegedly peaceful march that is nothing more than an escalation of their modus operandi against the Revolution, challenging authority and the socialist rule of law established in our Constitution. It is a plan orchestrated from abroad; think tanks and U.S. government spokespeople are involved in the conception and preparation of these. Recently they have threatened to impose more sanctions on our country if the legislation in effect here is used to prosecute those who disobey authorities' rulings. This action has been welcomed in circles of the anti-Cuban extreme right wing in the United States and is among action methods outlined in their non-conventional warfare manual. Their violent goals are evident when we recall the guarimbas (street barricades) in Venezuela, the crimes committed against Chavista fighters, events in Nicaragua, the promotion of vandalism, death threats against revolutionaries and support of characters and organizations with violent and terrorist histories, based in the United States.

The right to demonstrate is recognized and regulated in Article 56 of the Constitution, and must be exercised for lawful and peaceful purposes, respecting public order and in compliance with precepts established by law. Another of our Constitution's articles, Article 45, states: "The exercise of the rights of individuals is only limited by the rights of others, collective security, general welfare, respect for public order, the Constitution and the law."

On the other hand, Article 4 of this legal document states, among other issues, that the socialist system recognized in the Constitution is irrevocable, and that citizens have the right to combat by all means anyone who attempts to overthrow the political, social and economic order established by the Constitution. The call for the march is, therefore, not

lawful; it is a protest announcement in which promoters, public projections and links with subversive organizations or agencies financed by the U.S. government make clear the manifest intention to promote a change of political system in our country - a provocation as part of a "soft coup" strategy. Its goals coincide with the principal lines of attack, slander, lies and threats followed by those financed by the U.S. government who oppose Cuba's political system and are attempting to destabilize it and restore capitalism.

We are not going to legitimize imperialist meddling in domestic politics, nor are we going to open channels to aspirations for neocolonial restoration, accrued by some and reinforced in a situation of crisis. This is not a civic act; it is an act of subordination to Yankee hegemony. Such actions are intended to return the country to a historical period of subjugation, to which we will never return.

In the midst of these circumstances, many are also asking where we are heading, and I think it is important to answer this question. There is nothing new to say, we are simply moving toward what is contained in our programmatic documents, toward the development of the ideas from the last three congresses of the Party, which are contained in the Conceptualization of our Economic-Social Model and our National Plan for Economic and Social Development through 2030, in our Policy Guidelines and, above all, in our Constitution and all these documents, there are elements that provide an answer: "Cuba is a socialist state of law and social justice, democratic, independent and sovereign, organized with all and for the good of all as a unitary and indivisible republic, based on the work, dignity, humanism and ethics of its citizens for the enjoyment of freedom, equity, equality, solidarity, well-being and individual and collective prosperity."

Our Vision of the Nation defines us as a sovereign, independent, socialist, democratic, prosperous and sustainable nation, with a long-term National Economic and Social Development Plan and other actions in place to consolidate this vision.

Guaranteeing the irreversibility and continuity of our socialism by strengthening the principles that sustain it, economic development and raising the standard of living and quality of life of our people are combined with the necessary formation of ethical and political values, and is among the issues we have addressed here.

A democratic, prosperous and sustainable socialist society can be achieved based on deep revolutionary consciousness and sense of duty; the recovery of the value of work with efficiency and efficacy; the participation and creative initiative of workers; motivation; rational use and conservation of resources; progress and the application and generalization of the findings of science, technology and innovation; also taking into account a sustainable increase in production, as the essential material premise to gradually raise the standard of living and quality of life of the population,

and contributing to the full realization of human beings and their individual, family and collective projects through fair and equitable distribution of wealth, advancing in the eradication of illegitimate inequalities. This is the path we have taken, this is the path we are following and the goal we will reach sooner rather than later.

If someone were to ask us to define our socialism, in a short sentence, in a short phrase, we would say that it is to achieve the greatest possible social justice. (Applause)

In a meeting like this, we cannot ignore the economic situation the country is experiencing; the inflation the economy is facing is currently at levels higher than those foreseen in the Reordering Task, affecting the purchasing power of income received in Cuban pesos by retirees, pensioners, workers and the population.

The tightening of the blockade, along with the effects of COVID-19 have reduced the country's foreign currency income to minimum levels, which has not allowed for the financing of industrial productions, or imports of raw materials and consumer goods to maintain a stable supply in state retail outlets, in Cuban pesos, a situation that unscrupulous persons take advantage of to profit at the expense of the people's needs, reselling products, including food and medicines at prices much higher than the official ones.

On the other hand, due to the growing demand for foreign currency by the population and the non-state sector for domestic purchases and imports, along with the impossibility we face (to meet this demand), obliged to sell foreign currency at the official exchange rate, an informal market for the purchase and sale of foreign currency has been generated, also at exchange rates much higher than the official ones, which is expressed in the prices the population pay. That is why we must continue prioritize working on the implementation of anti-inflationary measures that require greater participation on the part of national state and non-state producers, in order to satisfy the demands of the population. Actions are required that allow for better control of the liquid resources in the hands of the population and that the increase be accompanied by an increase in supply.

In addition, compensatory measures have been adopted to protect the most vulnerable, but, nonetheless, they remain insufficient. The opening of tourism and economic activity, given our success in confronting the epidemic, will put us in better conditions to address this complex scenario. Thus, we can see bright spots along the way; there are solutions for each of the problems. Continuing to encourage collective debate to promote solutions to the problems, to explain them, socialize them, convince, reassure, mobilize, participate and improve are all necessary.

In the face of the offensive to discredit the Cuban Revolution and campaigns on social networks, provocations on the international level, calls for

constant protests and destabilization attempts, we have in place a revolutionary articulation on these social networks, are effectively confronting the counterrevolution with revolutionary and administrative vigilance, that have been reorganized during this period.

In facing the intensification of the blockade, we can count on international support, our own constant condemnations, as well as increasing participation and support from the Cuban community abroad that has not broken with the Revolution, or broken with its country.

Given limited income in foreign currency, we must continue advancing in reviving the economy under current conditions, boosting tourism, exporting vaccines, generating foreign currency, increasing domestic food production and also contributing to energy savings and efficiency.

In view of the shortages we have experienced for a prolonged period of time, we must get domestic products on the market, do everything possible to better supply stores in national currency, increase the marketing of agricultural products and also seek greater incidence and impact of measures we have adopted recently as the economy is opening, the development and contribution of new economic actors, along with that of state enterprises.

In order to eliminate long lines, we need to improve domestic commerce, seek a better supply of goods and services, better schedules, better management, and ensure that the opening of new economic activities also contributes to this.

Regarding the instability we have experienced in the National Electric Power System, we are making progress in repairs, maintenance, conservation, and also in attention to the system's workers, which will allow us to be in a better situation by the end of the year.

We are beating the pandemic with the health measures adopted and with our huge vaccination campaign, to which we are now adding boosters, which undoubtedly has already produced a significant level of immunization within our population, in this way we will continue advancing in cutting the transmission rate and returning, in the shortest possible time, to a new normal, which will also allow us to conduct our economic and social activity with more intensity.

And addressing the population's dissatisfaction requires a great deal of sensitivity and work with people, adequately attending the population, working in neighborhoods and reactivating mechanisms of popular participation. All this we must keep in mind in the discussions we hold during important upcoming processes, which we must ensure politically amidst this situation and were also discussed here. This requires from the Party a broad deployment of revolutionary politics.

We must make convincing arguments, propose debates and conduct them coherently, communicate with precision and clarity, put ourselves in the

place of others and try to understand their realities, counterpoise ideas and positions that lead to objective conclusions and that allow us to build a solid perception of the circumstances around any given phenomenon. This is about becoming pedagogues when interacting with society, not only in the way we transmit content, but also in the way we learn from this interaction. The greatest virtue lies in being useful and doing for others. Armando Hart analyzed these revolutionary practices and defined them as "the culture of doing politics," and we must do politics, referring to Martí and Fidel as their most outstanding and relevant exponents, and pointing out both as representatives of the "purest and most useful fruit of the history of Cuban ideas."

We must all assume, as a constant of life, Martí's definition of politics, as "the art of inventing a resource for each new resource of our adversaries; turning setbacks into good fortune; adapting to the present moment, without the adaptation requiring sacrifice, or delay... of the ideal being pursued; step back to gain momentum; attacking the enemy, before he has his armies in line, and his battle prepared."

As Hart reiterated on more than one occasion, it is necessary to know how to differentiate and, at the same time, relay ideology, understood as the production of ideas, with science, ethics and politics.

In these times, it is humanism that relays culture, development, social justice and allows to understand with science and ethics the confusing globalized world, in the real and the virtual, in the present and the future. This legacy, as a whole, constitutes the culture of doing politics, conceived as a category of practice that, fundamentally, consists of defeating the "divide and rule" used by the enemy, and establishing the revolutionary idea of "uniting to win," on ethical foundations that incorporate the vast majority of the population.

Thus, doing politics is determining the contradictions we have in society, studying them, considering their causes, evaluating and proposing solutions; interacting with the population, taking into account their opinions. Enrich, convince, summon, mobilize, participate and solve, and participate effectively also through networking around each of the issues we address, evaluating results and then providing feedback through all our systems, in order to improve them. This means, among other things, special work with the population and in particular with our youth. Maintaining maximum awareness of the role to be played by each revolutionary institution, working individually with each citizen, one by one and convincing; becoming proselytizers or pastors of the Revolution and socialism; preparing ourselves well and studying deeply to make decisions; deepening our knowledge and ideas of what is happening in our country and in the world; to be honest, courageous, effective and self-critical, with a dialectical and flexible mentality, never dogmatic, never tolerating opportunism, adhering to revolutionary principles, equipping ourselves with ideas and solid arguments so our cadres can perform their work; go out to

visit and talk with each person in each place; to discuss, explain, teach, educate and learn from each process.

Recuperating the time lost due to routine, schematicism and the lack of ties with the grassroots in a number of cases, and constantly extolling the dignity and resistance of our people, their talents and strengths, requires the prevalence of an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist approach, opposing the injustice and oppression that exists at a global level. This is why we must systematically maintain the meetings with sectors of our society that have contributed so much. In fact, many of their proposals are already being applied in what we are implementing.

To continue working adequately in the implementation of agreements reached at the Eighth Congress and to continue defending, as we saw here, the concept of people's power. In our neighborhood work, seeking democracy and participation, which means there are spaces to debate and propose and that after debating and proposing, there are ways to implement, and that after debating and proposing, action is taken. Then there will also be transparency to control, to exercise popular control, to be accountable and advance. And all this we can achieve with our ties with the people, with popular mobilization and strengthening and updating the work of our mass organizations, as demanded during debate at the Eighth Party Congress.

We must continue the identification of and confrontation against obstacles and bureaucratism, deepen the essences of the Revolution, promote debates, strengthen the exercise of popular power, and thus we will be strengthening the state; advance laws that deepen socialist democracy; develop the practice of workers' parliaments; reinforce the role of unions, assuming as a conviction what Che told to us early on about not conceding even a tiny bit to imperialism. We cannot capitulate to imperialism and its lackeys, and we cannot take even one step backward in the conquests of the Revolution. (Applause)

Cuba's response was designed by the maximum leader of the Cuban Revolution, the Comandante en Jefe, and it lies in people's power, a people's power that is not transferable, based on the people's sovereignty and articulated in the state structure through organisms with different functions.

To defend this concept of popular power is to defend the sustainability and viability of socialism in Cuba because it generates a truly democratic system far superior to capitalism.

Everything that stimulates, promotes and makes possible popular participation has defensive and constructive importance for our socialism and contributes to social emancipation and national emancipation. This is why we must guarantee the dimension of the principle of popular sovereignty that power comes from the sovereignty that resides untransferably in - who? In our people.

We must consistently promote mechanisms of popular participation. This is not a concession; it is an element essential to the legitimacy of our government.

Articulating and promoting participatory mechanisms in municipal and community spaces to meet the needs of citizens, is needed. And municipal administration must be based on avoiding and preventing problems in the community, leaving behind indifference and justifications, and designing true, effective popular control; the people exercising control over adherence to approved public policies and their effective implementation. It is time to study and propose the improvement of existing public policies or the approval of new ones to address manifestations of poverty, marginality, vulnerability in individuals, families, and communities and in attention to youth and the elderly. These aspects were also discussed here as a continuation of the meeting we held with presidents of municipal People's Power Assemblies recently.

Compañeras & compañeros:

The country is organized, we have a strong Party, an improving government, a Revolutionary Armed Forces and a Ministry of the Interior that are part of the people, with glorious histories and very loyal, and mass organizations which are revitalizing their work.

The country and the Revolution have suffered as a consequence of the situation we have lived, but patriotism and heroism have also been sown, commitment has been sown and is being harvested.

We must draw inspiration from the people, it is an opportunity for us to become aware, to overcome the difficulties, to struggle and fight for victory with no discouragement whatsoever.

The decision is to fight and win!

To close ranks, to struggle against our problems, to struggle with creativity, this is part of the battle!

There are enough revolutionaries here to confront any type of demonstration that seeks to destroy the Revolution -with intelligence, with respect and in defense of our Constitution, but also energetically and courageously.

Let the imperialists beware that they will be obliged to fight against a people that does not allow itself to be deceived, a people sufficiently numerous, courageous and heroic to struggle, not intimidated by threats! Every problem is an opportunity to become aware of our responsibility, a challenge to our ability to overcome difficulties, a test of our will to struggle. Onward always to victory!

Ready and willing to do everything to defend what is most sacred, what unites us; to be consistent with the unwavering decision of 'Homeland or Death, Socialism or Death' and the deepest conviction that we will win!

(Venceremos!)

Thank you very much. (Applause)